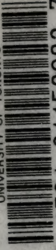
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GERMAN LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

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WILLIAM HARBUTT DAWSON

AUTHOR OF "GERMANY AND THE GERMANS," ETC.

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GERMAN LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

GERMAN LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE GERMAN'S FATHERLAND

IN one of the fervid songs which Ernst Moritz Arndt wrote to nerve his countrymen, in the time of national crisis and awakening nearly a century ago, the poet foretold the growth of a new and greater Germany, whose boundaries should be co-extensive with the German speech.

"What is the German's fatherland?" he asked. The answer was that in the time which he knew to be coming there would be one fatherland for all the Germanic races, which should be neither Prussia nor Austria, neither Bavaria nor Swabia, in particular, but these and every other piece of European territory on which German was the people's language. When Arndt sang, and prophesied, and fought for national

unity, Germany was little more than a geographical expression, and more than half a century had yet to pass before the movement which he and countless other patriots, both of the pen and the sword, laboured and lived to advance, took practical form. Only in 1871 did Germany as we now know it become united, but the unity then cemented proved very different from that which most of the national leaders of Arndt's day anticipated, since the largest of the German States was excluded from the ring-fence which Prince Bismarck drew around the twenty-five sovereignties which still retained their independence, and to which, with due regard to the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which came to an end in 1800, he gave the name of "German Empire."

Important though the part which Germany has played in the politics of Europe during the generation which has succeeded the crowning act of unity, and great though the significance of the Empire for England in particular, both as an intellectual and an economic force, it may be questioned whether hazier ideas prevail among us concerning the constitution of any other part of Europe than concerning this country. The average mind vaguely conceives of Russia as an amorphous monster of a land extending from a vague line, running somewhere down the centre of Europe, eastward to the Ural Mountains ; and

ignores the vast Russia which spreads thence into the illimitable tracts of Asia. So, too, the common view is apt to identify Germany with Prussia, and to overlook the fact that though Prussia is incontestably and beyond comparison the predominant partner, no fewer than twenty-four other separate States enter into the present Germanic Confederation, and that of these other States three are monarchies like Prussia itself, though the royal titles of the rulers of Bavaria, Saxony, and Wurtemberg are of later creation, being, indeed, part of the more durable handiwork of the first Napoleon.

The confusion is increased by the titular position bestowed by the imperial constitution upon the kings of Prussia. In reality the position carries with it little personal power. It is a presidency, not a sovereignty. As German Emperor the King of Prussia simply stands among the rest of the princes as *primus inter pares*. The real power belongs to the representative Council of the Federal Governments (the Bundesrath) and to the elected Assembly of the Empire (the Reichstag), between which it is divided equally, so that the one is a perfect counterpoise to the other. In the Federal Council, Prussia naturally, owing to its size and population, enjoys a much larger voting power than any other State,—having seventeen members out of a total of fifty-eight ; but even so its strength is barely

more than one against three. The remaining members are divided in the following proportions,—the Kingdom of Bavaria follows Prussia with six, then come the Kingdoms of Saxony and Wurtemberg with four each, the Grand Duchies of Baden and Hesse with three each, the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and the Duchy of Brunswick with two each, and the remaining seventeen States one each. Hence, even were the interests represented in the Federal Council not so various, and in part so conflicting, as they are, Prussia does not possess the means, even had it the will, to force upon the Imperial Government a special policy of its own which does not receive the full endorsement of a considerable number of its allies.

Yet Prussia is none the less the backbone of the Empire, and it was by no accident that it fell to its sovereigns to head the movement which led the German States to unity, on the basis of a confederation under the perpetual presidency of the kings of Prussia. Strange and romantic is the story which tells how the patch of sandy plain lying between the Elbe and the Havel, which Henry the Fowler took from the Wends to rule himself a thousand years ago, developed into the monarchy of Prussia, which was to give imperial Germany its head. "Good old Henry," as Carlyle calls him, created margraves to watch his boundaries or marches, and keep his trouble-

some neighbours in order. Among the margraviates were those of Meissen (the nucleus of Saxony), Austria, and Brandenburg. Four centuries later the Mark of Brandenburg reverted, owing to the failure of the ruling line, to the Emperor Sigismund, who, in consideration of money advanced and other services rendered, bestowed it, with the title of elector, in pledge—not to be redeemed—upon Frederick IV., Burggrave of Nuremberg (1415), a member of the Swabian family of Hohenzollern. Land was added to land, by marriage, by inheritance, by conquest, and especially Prussia, lying to the east, which was snapped off the old Polish kingdom. Finally the Elector of Brandenburg became King of Prussia by his own act of coronation (1701), and in the monarchy the old Mark was formally absorbed, though ever to be regarded as the heart of the realm and the bright, particular jewel of the Hohenzollern Crown. It was fitting, nay, was inevitable, that the line of rulers which had accomplished this marvellous expansion should lead Prussia to a still higher destiny.

In his essay *Shooting Niagara, and After*—of which the title rather than the thoughts have been appreciated by the British public to whom it was addressed—Thomas Carlyle wrote (the date was 1867, just after the Austrian war) : "It was a clear prophecy that Germany would either become honourably Prussian or go to gradual

extinction; but who of us expected that we ourselves, instead of our children's children, should live to behold it; that a magnanimous and fortunate Herr von Bismarck, whose dispraise was all in the newspapers, would, to his own amazement, find the thing was doable; and would do it, do the essential of it, in a few of the current weeks?" And yet the becoming "honourably Prussian" is a fate which the non-Prussian portions of the Empire have consistently resisted with all their might, so that even now, when over three decades have passed, Germany has not yet disappeared in Prussia, nor has Prussia succeeded in inducing the allied States consciously to accept German development on specifically Prussian lines.

It is necessary at the outset to make these points clear. Perhaps ninety times out of a hundred the allusions made in English newspapers to Germany and German institutions and customs relate merely to a part of the country, and, as often as not, words and acts attributed to the Emperor do not concern the Empire at all, but relate exclusively to the person and functions of the King of Prussia. The Emperor is, of course, Emperor every moment of his life, but in State affairs he possesses two distinct capacities, the imperial and the royal, and the one has not necessarily even the remotest connexion with the other. Moreover, while the imperial senti-

ment of the nation is on the whole strong and well-rooted, the individual life of the federated States and peoples has been but little influenced by the political unity which was consummated thirty years ago, and especially is this so in the larger States. The lustre of the Empire has not diminished the self-pride and self-consciousness of any of its component parts, and though imperial laws have decreed that the German's fatherland is coterminous with the entire Empire, there is still for each citizen a smaller and nearer and dearer fatherland—the monarchy or duchy or principality to which he and his fathers belonged when the Empire was no more than an idea. The figure-head of the Empire may impress his mind and imagination, but his affections belong to his own ruler, be his Court never so modest and his territories never so restricted. In Prussia only can it be said that the terms Emperor and King convey the same idea of sovereignty to the popular mind, since there is here identity of person, but outside Prussia there is still lacking to the imperial title and position the subtle magic and the deep sentiment which have gathered round the name and person of the immemorial "Landesvater." Travel in Bavaria, in Saxony, in Wurtemberg, and you cannot fail to be impressed by the State-consciousness, as opposed to the Empire-consciousness (if the words may be allowed) which characterises

the people. The Empire and the Emperor are gala-day institutions,—very real and dignified, yet uninspiring, and remote from the common interests of life. It is the territorial head of his own favoured section of the wide-reaching Empire who represents most really to the "provincial" German the idea of sovereignty, and the persons and traditions, the fortunes and interests of his governing house, however lowly its place in the rank of potentates, mean infinitely more to him than the grandeur of the imperial fabric and the splendour of the imperial name.

Viewed thoughtfully, all this is no misfortune, but the reverse. As imperial sovereignty is impossible in Germany, it is obvious that the political future of the country is best secured by the preservation in undiminished health and vigour in every individual State of the old sentiment of loyalty and personal attachment to the ruling head. We are learning that this sentiment affords one of the strongest guarantees of national stability in these days. It is one of the remarkable facts of modern times that, in spite of the spirit of unrest which is abroad, and of the strong democratic tendency which has revolutionised old systems of government, the monarchical principle appears to commend itself more and more strongly to all the most enlightened and progressive countries which have not done violence to their natural development. The princi-

palities of Germany passed through their time of trial half a century ago, and it was severe ; but by adapting themselves to the changed conditions, by making concessions, larger or smaller, to the newer conceptions of personal liberty which had become current, their position was strengthened rather than weakened, while their political efficiency was vastly increased. "March Revolutions" are so inconceivable in modern Germany that even in the residence-city of Berlin demonstration-loving Socialists are permitted once a year to pay reverent tribute, in the form of ribbon, wreath, and oration, to the memory of the insurrectionaries of 1848, who lie in a well-trimmed cemetery of their own.

Yet one of the most canvassed questions in German politics has come to be this one of the permanency or otherwise of the Empire. It is wonderful how often the stability of the imperial edifice is endangered in the eyes of short-sighted politicians and sensational journalists. To judge by the ill-balanced utterances of a certain section of the Press,—that which is consistently opposed to the Ministry of the day,—no great question of imperial policy ever crops up without the parliamentary system being exposed to a tension which it cannot possibly bear, and the Empire receiving a new and graver menace. The late Professor Rudolf von Gneist declared shortly before his death: "Discontent with the

course of public affairs is the natural condition of the German, varied only by rare episodes of patriotic enthusiasm." It is a severe criticism, but a true one. When any party powerful enough to be regarded as a serious factor in the political situation fails to get what it wants—to secure the passing of a pet measure, to force the Government to adopt its line of policy, or to refrain from following some other—it is the commonest thing in the world for its organs in the Press to startle the country with a solemn intimation that the Empire is in danger. Serious disaffection is reported to have broken out in the South German States. Particularism has risen from the grave to which it was unceremoniously committed in 1871. The Federal Government can with difficulty preserve even a threadbare appearance of harmony. The aristocracy is restive ; the burgher parties are anxiously wondering what the morrow will bring forth ; and the Social Democrats are already by anticipation dividing the spoils of a sundered society. In short, the Empire is visibly going to pieces, and Crown and Sceptre are not worth a week's purchase. This, of course, according to the Press ! Here is an actual sample of the sort of foreboding in which newspapers of this stamp—and they are not all insignificant newspapers, either—have periodically indulged ever since the Empire became a fact :

"Things have not for a long time been as they ought to be. The artificial rejoicings which a few Court purveyors and firms that deal in decorations and illuminations propose to arrange on the return of the Emperor ought to cause no illusion on this point. The feeling in wide circles, particularly in the South, is not favourable at the present moment to those who hold the reins of power in Prussia. The same may be said of many of the Courts in the German States, as anyone who watches the Press will easily discern."

"Anyone who watches the Press!" That is, indeed, the secret of the whole matter. For any one who watches the Press, or, better still, takes the trouble to go behind the Press and ask on whose authority and responsibility these national crises are so portentously notified to an unsuspecting but too easily disturbed public, will discover the utter hollowness and cant of the whole system of sensation-mongering. Germany, like some other countries, suffers from newspaper vanity. There, as elsewhere, the journalist is apt to magnify his profession and position, and, under the influence of an unfortunate inflation of ideas, he falls at times into the error of imagining that he, the journalist, is the true ruler, and that kings and governments and parliaments simply move to his hand like so many pieces on a chess-board. Such a misconception is excus-

able now and then, but when it becomes a settled conviction incalculable harm is done, and most of all to the newspaper, which abdicates a position which it may fill with honour, and in which it is at any rate taken seriously, in favour of one which it cannot really fill at all, and if it could, would occupy illegitimately and as a usurper. If anything could convince one of the safety of that much-threatened institution, the Empire, it is the success with which it has withstood the multitudinous crises through which—according to neurotic journalism—it has passed during the thirty years of its existence. But, in truth, the Cassandras of the Press do not mean what they say, and as the years pass by their doleful predictions are more and more losing both terror and credence.

It is undeniable that questions have arisen from time to time, and still arise, bringing to light the fact that State rights are not under the new *régime* just what they were under the old. Disputes have occurred over the jurisdiction of the Federal Council, as against the individual States which it represents, over the exact degree of independence reserved to those countries (Bavaria and Wurtemberg) which retained a qualified control of their postal or military systems, and even over the constitutional position and prerogatives of the Emperor himself. But such disputes were and are inevitable, and not

the most perfect imperial constitution humanly conceivable could have averted them. The wonder is that they have not been more numerous, and have on the whole produced so little visible friction amongst the federated States. But the Empire is stable and permanent because the prosperity of all the States, and the independence and the very life of most of them, depend upon its continuance. Political idealism apart, the instinct of self-preservation alone will compel the States to preserve the tie which has held them together for thirty years, and has vastly increased their strength, both collectively and individually. But there are more obvious and more tangible reasons to cause them to work together peaceably and with united will in the new traces. Since the Empire was established, the German States have enjoyed a measure of material prosperity such as, relatively, has fallen to hardly another country in the world. In the practical arts and sciences, in commerce and industry, Germany has leaped to the very front rank of world-Powers. The example of Belgium and Switzerland has shown what is possible in the way of mercantile progress to small States whose people are imbued with Northern energy and enterprise, and it is no doubt true that even on the old basis — given the absence of internal disruption and external disturbance — Prussia, Saxony, and Bavaria

would at least have won a creditable place in the international race for industrial prestige and wealth. But no one can doubt that the natural progress of these and other of the States has been immensely stimulated and increased by the political advantages which the creation of the Empire placed at their disposal,—the higher place which the States in combination took in the political councils of the world ; their unassailable defensive strength, which won for them, and compelled, attention and respect where hitherto the German name had carried little or no weight ; and the fact that the foreign policy of the Imperial Government, while primarily devoted, according to traditional principles, to maintaining territorial and treaty rights intact, has never ignored the opportunity of doing commerce a good turn. Prince Bismarck showed a true appreciation of Germany's political situation as well as the instinct of a true statesmanship when, after his retirement, he addressed (in 1895) to his fellow Prussians this appeal :

"We Prussians, we Bavarians, we Saxons," he said, "we are Germany, and we remain so, and we must study Germany's interests. Cling fast to the Imperial idea, even in the Prussian Diet. Do not forget that you are citizens of an Empire, and to think of him who is your King and Emperor, and who has duties towards the Empire and his confederates. I beg you

not to pursue a Brandenburg or a Prussian-national policy, but a German-imperial policy." Prussia is alive enough to the wisdom of this policy, while out of Prussia both its wisdom and its necessity are practically acknowledged. Prussia would be a Great Power even if it stood alone, but three-quarters of the smaller principalities would soon cease to be were the Empire to be dissolved. Hence, though the imperial idea may not have become so thoroughly naturalised as the best friends of German unity would like, and though slight and harmless ebullitions of particularism have not been rare in recent years, and may not be wanting in coming ones, there is little need to apprehend that the work of Prince Bismarck will ever be undone.

That Germans in general indulge the ambition of further territorial expansion in Europe may well be questioned. None the less, there are national idealists — and some of them very practical idealists, with swords hanging at their sides — who profess to anticipate a time when the Empire will correspond far more faithfully than now to the prediction of Arndt. Pan-Germanism is an attractive, though at present a very select and uninfluential, cult; and Pan-Germanism means, according to its inspirers and exponents, not simply a Germany which extends from the Rhine to the Vistula, but one

which includes Holland, Luxemburg, part of Belgium, and the bulk of Austria,— in the words of the patriot-poet, "Where'er resounds the German tongue." There is in wide circulation in Germany a "Pan-Germanic Atlas" (*All-deutscher Atlas*), which lays down in black and white this programme of a larger confederation. Taking time by the forelock, the authors of the atlas have already added to the Empire, so far as printed frontiers and colouring go, all those portions of the Continent which are inhabited overwhelmingly by the Germanic stock, whatever their existing rulers and constitutional arrangements. It would be unfair to attribute to the Pan-Germanic movement serious significance, and unjust to assume that there lives any responsible statesman who regards it with anything more than a pious curiosity ; yet the fact that the idea underlying it is in the air gives to the subject at least a speculative interest.

While there is no German who is not proud, even to a certain degree of overbearing vanity, of his country's ascent in the political scale, there are very many Germans, out of sympathy with material aims and successes of all kinds, who shrug their shoulders at the mention of its recent economic development. Trained in the school of the idealists, and forgetful of the realities of this most realistic age, they prefer to live in the poetry of the past, and would

barter all the modern millionaires of Germany for the brain and soul of another Fichte, all its manufactories and workshops for one more play by Schiller. It is refreshing to find in a country which is at present the world's wonder for rapid advancement in commerce and wealth, so strong a counter-balance of idealism, which recks nought of gold and gain, and deplores as an irreparable misfortune Germany's rush to the front as a mercantile Power. None the less, the Germany of to-day is essentially a land of shrewd-headed, practical-minded, deft-handed men and women, who are determined that, in the race for material wealth, their country shall never be found far behind. Not only so, but the Governments have, in every possible way, encouraged the commercial and industrial spirit, conscious, not only that the extension of Germany's markets is the sole way of finding employment for, and thus keeping at home, its growing population, but also that the country's costly military system can only be upheld so long as its material resources continue to increase. A flourishing commerce is the goose that lays the golden egg, and that is one reason why the bitter opposition of the agrarian classes to all recent measures for promoting trade at home and abroad has been resolutely brushed aside by the Imperial Government.

Yet it has certainly not all been gain, this

wonderful progress which has made Germany a land of countless millionaires in marks, and has drawn upon it the impatience and displeasure of not a few older and still wealthier competitors. The quiet and peaceful life of a generation ago has gone, and in its place are found the feverish haste and ugly scramble for wealth which everywhere so conspicuously characterise the age of "getting on." The external appearance of the country has changed. Not the capitals and cities only, but many a small provincial town, which once on a time abounded in historical, archæological, and picturesque charm, bears witness to-day to the modern "progressive" spirit, which values everything according to its exchangeability for metallic wealth. There is, it is true, a mediæval Germany which still defies end-of-the-century innovation with success. Go to Nuremberg, to Brunswick, to Augsburg, and you are at once transported into the age of the patricians, the Meistersinger, the cunning craftsmen, whose productions in wood, in glass, in enduring metals, both precious and base, and in decorative work are still the pride and wonder of industry and art. Many another ancient German town has so far compromised with modernity as to build outside the historic boundaries, so that the *Neustadt* ("New town") and the *Altstadt* ("Old town") meet and merge without quarrelling; and the effect of this

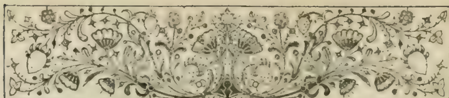
happy arrangement is that the olden charm and picturesqueness are preserved in their entirety. While thus the nineteenth century successfully asserts its claim to recognition, the centuries of the Fuggers, of Dürer, of Hans Sachs, have been guarded with delicate and reverent hand. But in many towns it is otherwise, and where vandalism has triumphed the result is wreck and desolation indeed.

There come to my mind at the moment two pictures — pictures of the same town, though they relate to different periods. Only a dozen years or so divide the one from the other, but the effect of that brief lapse of time was that of a fundamental transformation. It is a town in Central Germany, of great historic interest, which long seemed to have escaped altogether the tide of progress — for such let us call it — which began to sweep over the country at the beginning of the seventies. Situated amongst the primeval forest, the railway which passed by seemed almost to ignore its existence, as if it had neither time nor desire to cultivate an acquaintance with a place so old-fashioned. Passing into the town beneath the ancient Stadtthor, you found yourself in a quaint, grass-grown market-place, which, save on fair days, and on summer evenings, when work was over, was wrapt in an air of old-world quiet and sleepiness. Mounting the hills at whose feet the

little town lies, you looked down upon an expanse of red roofs and rambling *Gassen,* with an ancient brick church rising in the middle, and the only sign of modernity the line of glittering rails that emerged from, and lost themselves in, the forest in the distance.

Twelve years passed, and what a change had occurred in the meantime ! The hand of the innovator, the improver, the reformer, had been laid upon this unique relic of antiquity, and its charm, its picturesqueness, and its poetry had gone. Ancient buildings, whose eaves you might have touched with your walking-stick, had given place to huge stucco structures which seemed to dispute with the very hill-tops their place in the landscape. The old timbered cottages had for the most part disappeared, and gaudy villas reigned in their stead, made to order in vulgar styles, and flaunting themselves with all the airs of ill-bred snobbishness. The quiet shops of old, to which neither name nor sign had been attached, had given place to great modern bazaars. The pure, translucent atmosphere of the valley had been fouled by factory chimneys. In short, the sweet, peaceful, simple old life had altogether passed away, and the town and everything in it had become sadly and tragically new. The fate of this town is the fate of many another, and it is but typical of the great economic upheavals which belong to

the present generation. Germany has, in fact, entirely passed over to the industrial and commercial pursuits of nations. Not long ago, the late Imperial Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, declared it to be his conviction that genuine social progress had for the time been arrested, and the reason he gave was that the struggle for material advancement had checked the visible growth of all higher tendencies. Granting that Prince Hohenlohe's outlook may have been darkened by the distrust and apprehension which are more natural to age than to youth, nevertheless, no one can reasonably doubt that the spirit of materialism has laid hold upon Germany quite as strongly as upon other countries. What this means we shall know in coming years.



CHAPTER II

SOCIAL DIVISIONS

SOCIAL divisions are very fine and precise, and jealously observed, in Germany. The reason is not, however, the influence of wealth, but rather the fact that wealth in that unspoiled and unsophisticated land has not yet become the standard of personal worth, or the ultimate factor in the determination of social rank. A man may have at command the gold of a Crœsus, but if he have nothing more he will knock in vain for entrance into good society. Hence it is, that between "society," as Germany defines it, and the moneyed commercial classes, there exists a gulf deeper than any which divides the dollar from the dime in England or the United States. It is not by any means jealousy of wealth which causes the official, the military, and the educated classes generally to surround themselves with a sort of Chinese wall, but jealousy lest wealth should arrogate an influence which only belongs to it in societies of low or

decadent culture. That there is just a faint suggestion of snobbishness in this scrupulous isolation and reserve must, perhaps, be conceded ; but in the main the prejudice is intensely honest and real, and it must be regarded as such by anyone who would truly comprehend the spirit of German society. The merely opulent have, of course, their compensations ; they cultivate their own cliques, entertain each other sumptuously, and give the world to understand that they are of some account ; but they are not society, and they do not give the tone to the community of which they form part. You will hear this social ostracism of unadorned wealth indignantly, and even furiously, ridiculed by those who suffer from it, but the slight goes deep, and is accountable for a good deal of the disharmony which characterises class relationships in Germany. In the towns the sharp distinction which is drawn between education and money has simply the effect of allotting to each a social sphere of its own, and as the sphere is wide and varied, no great practical inconvenience is felt. In the country, however, the division is more searching, for there society is limited, and the operation of its unwritten laws is consequently more invidious.

How little culture and money are necessary associates in Germany may be judged from an instructive classification of the nation which

was drawn up some time ago by Professor Gustav Schmoller, the well-known economist. Schmoller divides the people into four broad groups. The first is an "aristocratic and well-to-do" group of 250,000 families, consisting (such is his conclusion) of large landowners, princes of industry, the highest State officials, popular doctors, and artists, and also *rentiers*, with incomes exceeding £450 a year. Then he places in the "upper middle-class" 2,750,000 families, including members of the landowning and commercial classes in medium circumstances, the majority of higher officials, and many members of the liberal professions, with incomes ranging between £135 and £450. A third group takes in 3,750,000 families of the "lower middle-class," made up of farmers, artisans, small tradespeople, officials, and the better-paid skilled work-people, with incomes ranging from £90 to £135. Lastly come 5,250,000 families, which he assigns to the "lower classes," comprising principally wage-earners, but also the humbler officials, and artisans and peasants of the poorer class, whose incomes fall below £45 a year. The classification at best can, of course, only be approximately accurate, yet it is significant of the comparatively small incomes generally ruling in Germany amongst the classes superior in education and social rank.

And here a noteworthy social characteristic

must be named in passing. The existence of so many universities, scattered over the length and breadth of the land, has the effect of distributing culture more evenly than would otherwise be the case. A considerable educated society is for this reason found not merely in one or two choice centres, but in a multitude of towns, and in this respect provincial Germany — if I may use that inexact but convenient term, for the Berliner is really as much a provincial to the Dresdener as *vice versa*—presents marked contrast to provincial England. Moreover, the ubiquity and multiplicity of Government officials, who are largely educated men, offer in almost the smallest of towns the nucleus of a cultivated circle, to which, thanks to the diffusion of university influence, the normal elements of its population invariably contribute. Hence the vastly greater amenity of life for educated people in the *Kleinstadt* (little town) as compared with England, and the facility with which the new-comer of that class finds and settles down in a congenial social sphere.

But the strongest and narrowest of all social prejudices are those which are indulged by the military class. It would be impossible to exaggerate the feeling of superiority entertained by the officer towards civilians in general, saving those of higher official rank, between whom and himself he is compelled to recognise a certain

identity of interest, in virtue of a common relationship to the Crown — not, be it noted, to the State, though it is the State which keeps both army and bureaucracy going. It is, of course, in garrison towns that military exclusiveness is carried to the farthest extreme. There but one society exists, and it is comprised of the officers' families. Into this charmed circle no one else can enter save by some rarely and discriminately bestowed act of grace. It lives its own separate life, and cultivates its own special interests, without the slightest thought of who exists or what goes on outside. To all intents and purposes, the ins and the outs, so far as this privileged coterie is concerned, constitute distinct social worlds, and if one talked German and the other Hebrew the alienage could not be more complete. The garrison town is thus no paradise for the civilian ; or, rather, its paradise is one which he may not enter. Like the Peri in Thomas Moore's poem, he must stand at the door disconsolate, with pain and tribulation proportionate to his ambition and vanity. There is, however, one bridge by which the civilian may cross the gulf of pride and prejudice and shake hands with the officer, and of course it is a golden one. The young officer is the most desired of matches, not because he is a fine fellow in himself and dances like a sylph, but because of the distinction which belongs to his profession. A

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military marriage is the dream of every girl of social aspirations, but it is a dream which can only be said to have even a remote correspondence with the facts of life when her rank is something more than tolerable, and when, above all, her father is well provided with this world's goods and is willing to share them with a martial son-in-law. For the junior officer excuse can be found for thus putting a price upon his own head. Unless he be possessed of private means marriage is impossible, for the pay is very small, and below a minimum income he is forbidden to covet a fireside of his own. It is only when the rank of captain is reached that this prohibition is removed, though even then the advantage of an independent fortune is a very real one.

But here the officer does not stand alone. A peculiarity of professional life generally in Germany is the comparatively late age, according to English ideas, at which men seriously enter on their careers. The reason is the long and severe course of training which the State requires as a condition of entering any department of the public service or of following either the medical or the legal profession. At an age when with us many a man has already made a name, and won for himself a position which satisfies a fair human ambition, the German is still patiently and industriously overcoming the preliminary obstacles to

his onward march. Hence come the late marriages which are so common, and the universal disparity between the years of husband and wife. Both law and medicine are hedged round by conditions and requirements which make success a very real index of merit. Both the judge and the advocate of the future must have pursued systematic legal study at one or more of the universities and have passed searching examinations before being permitted to place foot on the lowest rung of the professional ladder. Practical experience in the courts of law follows, and only after further State examinations have been successfully gone through is the way to an independent career and a livelihood clear. The legal openings are many and various, though few are brilliant. The great majority of jurists elect to continue in the service of the State, for judgeships of all degrees of importance and dignity, besides a multitude of administrative positions presuming legal training, are within reach ; but, so far as income goes, the private practitioner of ability has a far better prospect.

The entrance to the medical profession is equally guarded by regulations. The theory of the law is that the practice of medicine, like every other occupation, is free, but this franchise is merely apparent, and only applies, as with us, to such irregular professors of the healing art as care to dabble in drugs and lotions, and take the

risk, which is a serious one. The use of any sort of title whatever is an illegality of the gravest kind, unless the bearer has passed through the university course of study which the State prescribes, and has duly taken his diplomas. For it is the State, and no private corporation, however august, which confers on a man the right to dispense physic and to relieve you of your limbs, just as it is the State which authorises him to contend, at the risk of his soul, that black is white and wrong right in the courts of law. Even in the very personal matter of the highness or lowness — and it is generally the latter—of his fees, the State Department for Public Health claims a right to be consulted in the rare cases where the local arrangements between the medical faculty and the public break down. How doctors charge has always been a problem of the utmost mystery to the average English citizen, who is more concerned to keep the family physician, much as he respects him, out of the house than to squabble about the precise meaning of the term "medical attendance." In Germany the matter is extremely simple. The family doctor does not charge at all. You fix your own fee, send it to him on New Year's Day, with a host of good wishes, and both parties to the transaction live happily for a whole twelvemonth afterwards. It is, of course, understood that the sum handed to the doctor shall be in just

proportion to the services which have been rendered, so far as the fallible judgment of the debtor can determine so exact a point, but as the relationship between *Hausarzt* and patient is of the usual friendly and intimate character, it is only in exceptional cases that misunderstandings occur.

One result of the educational and legal restrictions which surround the medical profession is that a very high standard of ability is preserved all round, and another is that the profession is much closer than in England, and its members not so numerous in proportion to population. Public confidence in the entire class of medical practitioners is unquestionably strengthened by the public conviction, which nothing can shake, that there is only one possible kind of doctor, and only one way of making him,—he must have passed through a university and taken there a full degree bearing the seal of State authority.

No small proportion of the pseudo-doctors who thrive on the ailments and the credulity—mostly the latter—of English people of certain classes would in Germany speedily find themselves in the clutches of the law, for the legal enactments against imposture of the kind are very drastic and do not stand much on ceremony. Not long ago a German provincial doctor, possessing the full medical qualifications, left the monotonous paths of orthodox pathology

and began to practise homœopathy, and soon he won such notoriety that persons consulted him from far and near. It was a very remunerative departure, for he posed now as a specialist, and charged fees accordingly. Unfortunately, a case in which he prescribed a phial of innocent globules, where amputation of the limb was the proper and only cure, ended fatally, and a jealous Public Prosecutor took the matter up. The trial came on duly, and it proved a national nine days' wonder. All that could be alleged against the defendant was that homœopathy was no substitute for surgery ; there was no suggestion that the medicines given, such as they were, had done injury ; yet the Court summarily sent the indiscreet practitioner to prison for several years, and dispossessed him of £150 of his abundant profits, by way of fine. The public with one voice applauded the verdict, for on this subject of medical propriety public opinion is very strong in Germany, yet perhaps not more strong than wholesome.

Even at their best, law and medicine do not in Germany offer the prizes which are attainable, by the privileged few, in England. The same may be said of literature, though with reservations, for by all accounts there are gold mines as yet unexhausted in the domains of romance and drama, if no others. German letters have had their Grub Street era, but it is far behind.

Klopstock is said to have received from his publisher a beggarly six shillings a sheet for the first edition of his *Messiade,* and to have compounded for the second edition for a suit of clothes : and Schiller's early poverty is only a counterpart, though more tragic, considering the fine temperament of the man, of that of Johnson, Goldsmith, and many other English men of letters, whose contemporaries considerately starved them during their lifetime, so that by the crucifixion of the flesh the spirit might soar to higher altitudes. But literature is nowadays a decidedly remunerative pursuit for those who really can write, providing they write either novels or plays. It was recently stated on good authority that Gustav Freitag received as much as £21,000 for one of his novels, that the royalties which fell to Fritz Reuter and his descendants for the former's *Plattdeutsch* (Low German) tales amounted to £100,000, and that Hermann Sudermann has already derived over £15,000 from his plays. But successes like these are few and far between, and the earnings of the average German literary man are by no means brilliant. The yearly output of books is fabulous, but the library and the reading circle make havoc with the publishers' sales. Moreover, periodical literature does not offer those wonderful opportunities of earning "£600 a year" which are understood to come within reach of even the literary novice in the

chosen home of the review and the magazine, when once he has bought the latest guide to literary opulence and eminence. To the English author it must be a source of perpetual surprise that one-tenth of the splendid and scholarly books on scientific and technical subjects which see the light in Germany should pay the mere expenses of publication.

Among the most interesting questions suggested by the treatment of social divisions are the position taken by the nobility and the unique and highly complicated system of titles which has grown up in all parts of the country. Notwithstanding that a German democratic pseudo-Parliament, born out of due time, decreed half a century ago that titles should for ever be abolished, the nobility is held in undiminished esteem. Even the democrat, in Germany as in other countries, dearly loves his lord, and shows an abnormal regard for titular honours of every kind. But the term nobility is one of wide significance and embraces very various and disproportionate degrees of social distinction. What is called the "high nobility" (*der hohe Adel*) embraces members of the ducal and princely (*fürstlich*) houses — Germany has two kinds of princes — and the mediatised "countly" (*gräflich*) houses. The latter are the families which in the old German Empire stood in a direct or "immediate" relation to

the Emperor and possessed both seat and vote in the Diet. Many of the ancient territorial houses, on the other hand, recognised superiors between themselves and the head of the Empire, to whom they were accordingly only mediately related. At the beginning of the present century, when the "Roman Empire of the German Nation" was dissolved, a large number of the petty rulers were deprived of their independence and so became "mediatised." They belong still, however, to the "high nobility," and enjoy various more or less substantial privileges, as exemption from military service, membership of the First Chambers of their national Legislatures, and the recognition of equal birth with the reigning families. Important judicial functions were originally conceded to them, but these were abolished in 1877, and they have likewise been deprived of certain powers of control which they formerly exercised over Church and school.

The lower, or inferior, nobility (*der niedere Adel*) was originally identical with the knighthood, and comprised those who received knightly rank either from the Emperor (old style) or their own princes. Now it is graded into counts, barons (*Freiherren*), knights, and noble persons without further title. A severe distinction is, however, drawn between the old lower and the new lower nobility. To the former are

reckoned only such families as have borne noble rank for a long period of years, and only a member of the old nobility is conscious of the immense social gulf which separates him from the new creations. Again, a further distinction is drawn between the hereditary nobility and the "personal" nobility, the honour being restricted in the latter case to the life of the bearer. No special legal privileges are enjoyed by the members of the lower nobility, for though they alone are eligible to certain Court offices, and to the benefit of certain charitable foundations, these are only prescriptive rights and carry no inviolable title.

Where titles are not enjoyed, the most obvious evidence of noble rank is the coupling of the prefix "von" to the surname. It is but a little word in itself, but socially it is a very large and powerful one. Let a man be able to sign himself "von" and he will regard the world with very satisfied feelings. He cuts himself off by virtue of this one diminutive syllable from the entire mass of ordinary mortality, and there is no gift or faculty, no power or privilege, which he would exchange for it. But, while he would not barter his precious prefix away for any earthly bliss, he is willing enough, where circumstances make it prudent so to do, to allow it to be shared by a partner in life who can help him to support it with becoming dignity ; and

the cases in which an arrangement of the kind would appear to be either prudent or compulsory are numerous. Often their "bit of nobility," to use the phrase of Goethe,[1] who himself was "von Goethe" by creation and not by inheritance, is the only worldly possession which remains to men and women who are prodigiously proud of their social superiority to the richest of their burgher neighbours. It is a human weakness which one may well regard with indulgence, especially when the impoverished noble can say with King Francis I., of France, "All is lost save honour." And yet the use of the magic "von" is not an exclusive monopoly of the nobility, for there are burgher families which legitimately attach it to their names, just as there are noble families who do not employ it at all. In order to claim membership of the lower nobility by birth it is only necessary that the father shall already be nobilitated, but in the case of the higher nobility there must

[1] See his *Leiden des jungen Werthers* (book ii., date December 24, 1771): "And the splendid misery; the tedium amongst the repellent people who are found together here! Their rank jealousy — how they watch and wait to gain a step over each other; the most miserable and wretched passions, without any disguise. There is a woman, for example, who talks to everybody about her nobility and her land, so that every stranger must reflect: 'Here is a fool, who imagines the most wonderful things about her bit of nobility and the fame of her country,'" etc.

be unquestionable noble blood on both sides. The right to confer this noble prefix lies with the prince of each State, but it is not largely exercised. In the more important States elevation to the nobility is awarded as a mark of very exceptional distinction, where such a title as "Privy Councillor" or "Real Privy Councillor," though both very dignified, would be inadequate, as, for example, in the case of great scientists and painters, and (much more rarely) of famous leaders of industry. The name of Hermann Helmholz, Anton Werner, and Werner Siemens are contemporary examples from these three departments of life. In more than one State that could be mentioned the noble "von" can be acquired by less arduous means, and the power of money has even been hinted at in this connexion, so that in such cases, as Lord Castlereagh wittily said, to be without decoration of any kind *C'est aussi une distinction.* In Bavaria it was formerly the common practice of pushing tradesmen to address all officials as nobles, and many a plebeian breast glowed with pride at the complimentary attention, until the Government heard of the irregularity, and sternly bade its servants disown sham dignities.

Great importance is attached to titles other than those of nobility, and to orders ; and he who has neither head nor tail to his name is not regarded as belonging to the elect of society.

Prince Bismarck was the happy possessor of over fifty orders, both Prussian and foreign, not to speak of honorary doctorates of law, philosophy, medicine, and even of theology. So wide-reaching, however, is the State service that even officials of comparatively lowly position can always hope to receive sooner or later in their careers some titular sign that their work has been appreciated. The orders and merit badges of the Crown fall almost exclusively to the various branches of this service,—and especially to the defensive, administrative, and judicial branches, and to academic teachers, since these include the great majority of scholars and scientists of distinction,—and they take the form of stars, crosses, ribbons, and medals, far more than a thousand of which are distributed in Prussia every year. "Decoration Day" (*Ordensfest*) is there identical with Coronation Day (January 18), and to the ceremony all the new recipients of royal favour are invited. The common official title is Councillor (*Rath*), which has many forms, as Government Councillor, Privy Councillor (which must not be confounded with the English title), Real Privy Councillor, Councillor of Legation, Councillor of State, Councillor of War, Consistorial Councillor, Court Councillor, Councillor of Justice, School Councillor, Sanitary Councillor, Medical Councillor, Mining Councillor, Forest Councillor, Post

Councillor, while smaller Courts create such titles as Councillor and Higher Councillor of Studies, Councillor of Taxes, and Town Police Councillor. In Saxony the commonest title is Court Councillor (*Hofrath*), so called because its possessors seldom or never have any association, direct or indirect, with the Court ; it is simply a title of courtesy. Some of these Councillor titles are meaningless and paltry, though nothing could convince their bearers of such a thing, but most of them are dignified and carry great social weight. A title which often crowns a successful mercantile career is Councillor of Commerce, to gain which distinction an ambitious man will often make princely contributions to public and benevolent projects.

This superfluity of titles is embarrassing in more ways than one. In the first place, it is presumed that you are acquainted with the dignities of everybody with whom you come into contact, and, in the second, it is expected that you will address people accordingly. For to address a person, either orally or in writing, who either bears a title or belongs to the official or professional class, without prefixing his degree, might be a cause of great offence. Actions at law for disrespect are even instituted because of the withholding of titles rightfully acquired. Mr. A., who is a Court Councillor, must be spoken of as Mr. Court Councillor A. Doctor

of Philosophy B., who is a university professor and a Privy Councillor, expects to be addressed as Mr. Privy Councillor Professor Doctor B. Nor may Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. be overlooked, for they share their husbands' titular privileges ; the one is Mrs. Court Councillor A., and the other Mrs. Privy Councillor B. But the custom of prefixing to a name the degree of the bearer goes through the whole range of professional life. The convenient English "Reverend" has no equivalent, but instead the clergyman becomes Mr. Pastor So-and-so. Mr. Juvenal Brown, the editor of the local news-sheet, is addressed as Mr. Editor Brown, and on the same principle we have Mr. Stamp-Collector Jones, Mr. Post-master Robinson, Mr. Road-Inspector Smith, and so on. And even where the claimants to this distinctive form of address are indifferent to it, their wives are not. In the medley of small-town society, formality of the kind is observed to the point of childishness. More offence is given, more heart-burning is generated, more friendships are destroyed, more women are made unhappy and sent home from the scene of social intercourse in chagrin and high dudgeon, through disregard of this trivial point, than through all other causes put together.

And here some of the customs peculiar to social intercourse are worthy of passing note.

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You address a lady whom you know but slightly as "Gracious lady" (*gnädige Frau*) or "Gracious Mademoiselle" (*gnädiges Fraulein*), according as she may be married or single. In company you may introduce yourself — instead of staring vacantly into space — to a fellow-man by the mere statement of your name, which promptly brings the same valuable information from the person accosted, and the ice is broken at once. The older public salutations are going out of vogue, though Germans are not in general so prodigiously vacuous as to appeal to the weather, past, present, or future, when addressing each other in the street. "Obedient servant!" is still a gallant greeting where the acquaintance is slight or where a lady is saluted. And here it should be remarked that to salute first in public is not the prerogative of the lady. The English practice is certainly a preferable one, inasmuch as it very properly protects a lady's dignity and choice in so important a matter as the regulation of her acquaintance. The superficial side of courtesy is best seen in letter-writing, — not, however, that the deference which is paid you in documents is always intentionally insincere ; it is simply allowed to run riot. The French have their own ideas on this subject, but the Germans rival them in their special way. Here is the beginning of an official letter which a person of educated rank may any day receive,

to his lasting edification : "To his highly well-born Herr Doctor [for the doctor may be taken for granted]. The undersigned permits himself devotedly to inform your highly well-born self that your honoured writing has received," etc. And the writer may, in conclusion, assure the highly well-born recipient of his "most excellent high esteem" and subscribe himself as "highly respectful and most obedient."

Such a parade of compliment is very artificial, no doubt, and prosaic folk may see through its hollowness, but to the mass of men, who are not insusceptible to vanity, the rigours of officialism are wondrously tempered by the elegant phrases in which they are expressed. The obsequious Jewish shopkeeper, however, is the only man who understands the gentle art of epistolary address completely. If you are a notorious nobody he will address you as "Sir," or, at most, "Honoured sir," and sign himself, "Yours," or "Respectfully." If you are something above a negation you will be addressed as "Very honoured sir," or "Well-born" ; and should your calling be associated with letters you may rely on receiving the title of "Doctor," whether you have had it before or not, from your "highly respectful" or "most humble," but in all cases "very obliging," correspondent. But this is only the beginning of a gradation of compliment which in its higher forms would

be sublime were it not ridiculous. Not only are these empty attentions given, but most people insist on receiving the exact degree of respect which they deem to be due to their position. A Berlin jury a few years ago gave a singular pronouncement on the subject. A lady accused a tradesman of an intended insult in that he had only signed himself in a letter "Most humbly," and not "Respectfully and most humbly," and the Court took the complainant's view and fined the offender, though on appeal its verdict was reversed. Polite usage requires a clergyman to be addressed with "Your reverence," instead of with the unoriginal "Dear sir." Where high officials have to be approached, deference becomes doubly and trebly servile ; yet here there is a proper code of formality which may not be departed from on pain of giving dire offence. "Full of reverence," "Dutifully," and "Full of awe," are rising grades. Here is an address which is probably written hundreds of times a week in Germany, for it is the courtesy due to a well-known public official, whose rank is very far below that of a Minister of State : "Highly-reverenced Mr. Real Privy Councillor, highly-to-be-reverenced Mr. President." A Minister of State is addressed as "High and mighty," though the words may even be used in the superlative. A ruling Count is "Illustrious," a Prince (not of the royal blood) "Most Serene,"

and a Prince of the blood "Royal Highness," while to a King are applied all the attributes of dignity, grandeur, and awe, in their supremest forms, which can well be expressed in poor, mortal words.

Though titles and honours are so numerous and so various, the law accords to them all its jealous protection. In Prussia punishment by a heavy fine and imprisonment may be incurred by anyone who without right uses either title, "predicate of nobility," order, or other decoration, official designation or emblem, and even uniform. The laws on this subject would abolish not a few titular absurdities and impertinences common in England. For in Germany you may be sure that a man's title, whether official or professional, is genuine and legal, even though it should at times strike you as incongruous. There are no sham doctors, whether of letters or medicine, no "professors" of music or art save those who are either attached to State academies, or have received the title by special favour of the Crown; and even the smallest universities are nowadays scrupulously jealous of any disparagement of their degrees. Formerly the conditions of acquiring these were in some cases by no means onerous, but since the establishment of the Empire introduced the principle of one citizenship for the whole of Germany, a student can divide his semesters amongst as many universities

as he chooses. Hence, the standard of the less efficient universities has had to be raised, and their examination tests to be made severer, though there is yet a decided difference between the best and the worst.

CHAPTER III

THE "ARBEITER"

ALTHOUGH Germany has passed beyond recall into the rank of industrial countries, the factory system took root there far later than in England, and its great expansion is of comparatively recent date. Down to the end of the eighteenth century the majority of workmen belonged to the artisan class, for the handicrafts still continued in health and vigour. Employers on a large scale were few in number. Small, independent trades and workshops, in which the masters worked side by side with their journeymen and apprentices, were the rule. Even the old Guilds existed to some extent, though their vitality and power were exhausted, partly owing to organic defects which had long foreshadowed decay, and partly owing to the gradual rise of new economic and political conditions. On the land, labour was largely forced, and the peasantry remained in a condition of serfage, from which the Stein and Hardenberg laws of 1807 and later

were to relieve them. Neither in town nor in country was the modern relationship between employer and employed known.

Hence the general conditions of labour in Germany to-day are precisely what would be expected where the evolution of industry has been retarded. The number of hours in all industries and occupations alike is excessive, when compared with the English standard, though the German *Arbeiter* is in this respect no worse off than Continental workmen generally. Eleven hours a day may be taken as a fair average, but there is no free Saturday afternoon, though the full term is often curtailed somewhat on that day. In many factory districts the hours even run to twelve hours a day or more. There is, in fact, no legal limitation in the case of men, except that Sundays and festivals are now regarded as statutory days of rest. Not only is the duration of work on the whole excessive, but the factories and workshops, in spite of legal regulations and Government inspection, often leave much to be desired on the score of healthiness and comfort. But amongst work-people the movement in favour of the legal restriction of the hours of toil is spreading rapidly. The Socialist party used to demand a ten-hour day, but it now asks for a normal day of eight hours, on the plea that with such a limitation work would be provided for the unemployed and

over-production would be reduced. On the other hand, the trade-unions ask that the number of hours may be fixed locally, so that the special circumstances of every district and every industry may be allowed to influence the determination of the normal day. Yet a long time must elapse before Germany will adopt the limitations already enforced in England. The manufacturers strongly oppose a legal reduction of hours, on the ground that they are striving to build up foreign trade, and that they are already heavily hampered by the obligations which are imposed on them by the Industrial Insurance Laws.

Very considerable restrictions are, on the other hand, placed upon the employment in factories and workshops of children, young people, and women, in whose protection the German laws go much farther than can be expected in England for many years to come. It has even been proposed that married women should be excluded from the factories altogether. How such a far-going measure is regarded by the manufacturers may be judged from a petition recently addressed from Chemnitz to the Imperial Chancellor. This significant document deprecated the placing of any additional limitations upon the employment of married women in factories, on the grounds that "wages are so low that it is a presupposition of marriage that the wife will take her place by her husband's

side," and that "there is already a chronic insufficiency of economical female labour in the textile industry."

But the most prolific source of industrial discontent is the lowness of wages, rather than the long hours. The best-paid classes of work-people do not yet compare with the same classes in England, and the common rate of payment is very much lower. Even in the steel, iron, and coal industries the average earnings do not exceed £1 a week. In the textile trades this average is not reached. On the State railways porters are paid from 15*s.* to £1 3*s.* a week, according to length of service; stokers £1 to £1 8*s.*, and engine drivers from £1 3*s.* to £2. Bricklayers in Berlin, where the wages for such work are the highest, receive 7*d.* to 7½*d.* per hour, and work nine hours a day. It is, of course, in the rural districts, where decaying house industries are carried on,— in parts of Silesia and Saxony, on the Bohemian border, in the Erzgebirge, and the Riesengebirge — that the condition of the labouring population is most unfortunate. These small industries still employ over half a million people, in spite of the unequal odds against which they have to contend. The more important occupations are weaving and spinning; hand and machine sewing; paper-, metal-, and wood-working; and musical instrument and clock making.

Alike in regard to wages, housing, and food—largely potatoes—the condition of the house-workers in most country districts is lamentable, and in towns it is not much better. It would, indeed, be difficult to exaggerate the misery which has for years been the lot of this class of workers. Where, as in Silesia, a hand-weaver is glad to earn 5*s.* or 6*s.* for work which occupies nine days of from sixteen to eighteen hours (less than a halfpenny per hour), while his wife toils six hours a day for three weeks to complete a web which will bring her an equal sum, the problem how to make ends meet suggests to the social economist many reflections. Yet with all their poverty these people are self-reliant, upright, and not without the crowning virtue of self-respect. The Governments do their best to relieve exceptionally acute distress when it occurs, and early every winter the prospects of the poorer classes of house-workers located in remote districts are carefully inquired into, so that contingencies may be prepared for. Next to the house-workers, women are the worst paid, especially where, as often happens in towns, there is severe competition for the work offered. An investigation into the wages earned by sixty thousand women engaged in Berlin showed a weekly average of 10*s.* to 11*s.* The minimum fell to 8*s.* and 7*s.*, and the highest rates were 15*s.* to 17*s.* Out of such earnings

the female worker had to pay 8*s*. to 9*s*. for food and lodging. Beginners and unskilful work-people, however, can hardly earn enough to provide the absolute necessaries of existence. In Posen, women's wages for home-sewing only amount to from 6*d*. to 9*d*. per day of eleven hours.

Nevertheless, industrial wages in Germany tend to increase : of this there cannot be a doubt. The development of the national industries, the extension of foreign trade, and the growing dis-satisfaction and assertiveness of the urban work-people have all contributed to this tendency. Strikes for better pay are no longer of rare oc-currence, and now that the conviction is spread-ing amongst working-men of all classes that Jack is as good as—or better than—his master, peaceful relationships between employers and employed can be counted on with no greater certainty than elsewhere.

Yet it may be questioned whether the increase of wages has produced a corresponding improve-ment in the material condition of the working classes generally. Taking the country as a whole, the standard of life is certainly higher than twenty and even ten years ago, but the very causes which have enabled the working-man to secure better remuneration for his labour, coupled often with a shorter workday, have made demands upon his purse which have

largely nullified the advantages so gained. House rents in the towns have largely, in some cases ruinously, increased, and the rise in prices, consequent to some extent upon the drastic system of Protection which is now in force, has made many of the necessities and comforts of life dearer even to the producer himself. The following actual weekly budget of a working-man of average earnings may be taken as fairly representative. The income was 23*s.*, and this was distributed as follows : — Rent, 3*s.* 8*d.* ; taxes, 4*d.* ; clothing, 2*s.* 11*d.* ; coffee, 7½*d.* ; potatoes, 1*s.* 11½*d.* ; cheese, 7½*d.* ; butter and fat, 2*s.* 6*d.* ; beer, 1*s.* 5½*d.* ; bread, 1*s.* 5*d.* ; meat, 1*s.* 3*d.* ; fire and light, 1*s.* 4*d.* ; total, 18*s.* 1*d.*, so that there remained for pleasure, school expenses, and as savings towards old age, the sum of 4*s.* 11*d.*

The system of taking meals away from home prevails amongst the working classes of Germany to a large and increasing extent. Partly it is due to the long distances which urban work-people must travel to and from work ; partly to the fact that husband and wife are often equal contributors to the domestic purse, so that no one remains in charge of the home ; but another reason is the simpler fare with which the German workman is contented, and this he can obtain easily and inexpensively from the numberless refreshment-houses and taverns

PEASANT COSTUMES

which exist for his convenience, and thrive on his patronage. In many of the large towns excellent eating-houses of a homely kind are maintained by philanthropic societies, and that on a paying basis, at which wholesome food is offered at ridiculously low prices. At the so-called People's Kitchens in Berlin, a farthing will purchase a substantial roll of bread ; a halfpenny commands a basin of soup ; and for a penny the diner may revel in the succulency and mystery of wonderfully named sausages, consuming any reasonable number of huge chunks of loaf-bread ; while a set-dinner of truly Gargantuan proportions may be had for threepence.

How far better the condition of the German labouring classes might have become had they endeavoured to work out their own salvation on the lines and by the measures adopted in England, is an interesting point of speculation. Where German work-people show to great disadvantage when compared with English is in their failure to take advantage of trade-union combinations. In political organisation and warfare, and in mastery of political propagandism, the German workman is incomparable. In industrial organisation and warfare — in spite of all his talk of solidarity — he is a child, and it is seldom that he can hold his own in any severe labour dispute which is pushed to the pitiful arbitrament of the strike. Taking strikes which

happened during five recent years in the Grand Duchy of Baden, in which are the industrial towns of Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Pforzheim, Freiburg, and Constance, two-thirds ended in the total defeat of the work-people engaged. The greatest strike of modern times in Germany — that of the colliers of the Saar coal-field in 1892–93 — was begun under circumstances which to the organised and practical-minded English trade-unionist must have denoted the height of folly. The miners acted at the outset on no concerted plan; no serious attempt was made to avert a struggle before the men went out; and, strangest fact of all, the strikers had in readiness no funds whatever wherewith to carry on the struggle, and, while it lasted, had to subsist upon casual collections raised in all parts of Europe. What made the strike the more remarkable was the fact that the employés of the State mines were the chief strikers, and by universal testimony they were better paid and better treated than any others in the Saar coal-field.

Unpractical in this as in some other things, the German workman has lavished his energies and his means upon political organisations, which have made him discontented with his condition without showing him how to improve it. The triumphs of Social Democracy are a proof of his marvellous capacity for organisation, as well as of his enthusiasm for an idea, but

Social Democracy has never yet added a cubit to his material stature. Ferdinand Lassalle, it is true, strove to win the German working classes for Socialism and Political Democracy, but hand in hand with his political agitation and ideals went practical measures — dreamy, let it be admitted — the effect of which was to have been the economic advancement of the working classes, *pari passu* with their assumption of greater political power. Modern Social Democracy — the Social Democracy of which Liebknecht and Bebel have been the principal exponents — has reversed this order. The material welfare of the working classes is, of course, its ultimate aim, but instead of aiming at progress line upon line, here a little and there a little, it has elected neither to ask nor to accept anything short of ultimate aims. It is as though the seekers after the Promised Land had sent all their tents and baggage on before, forgetting that the way thither lay through the wilderness-wandering and travail of many years.

And what has Social Democracy done for the German working-man? Given him an ideal. That is true, and it is something in this intensely practical age. Made him a unit in a mighty party unique in the history of political organisation and propagandism. That is equally incontestable. But when so much is admitted, the fact still remains that, so far as his material condition

goes, it has bettered him but little, if at all. I am aware that it may be objected that this is a low and inadequate way of judging a great political movement, the like of which the world has not before known. But the answer is that the avowed aim and end of Social Democracy is not a political ideal, is not some perfect condition of political government, but rather the improvement of the workman's material status, — that, and nothing more. Hence it is legitimate to judge it, and to estimate its value for the working classes, by what it has done towards securing for its adherents at least the promise of worldly good, — the only good about which Social Democracy concerns itself, — which is its one and only justification. After all, the successes and failures of party life are as much dependent upon methods as upon men ; and the methods of popular advancement followed by the modern leaders of German Social Democracy have by no means justified themselves. Had the incalculable funds and the vast amount of time and energy which have been expended in one way or another upon winning the working classes to the belief in an economic phantom — or, if the expression be disputable, in an economic order which at best must be regarded as of a nature of the far-off divine event — been used in securing an immediate improvement in the general status of labour, with or without

legislative assistance, a double purpose would have been achieved ; for then not only would the social conditions of the working classes have been ameliorated, but there would have been put into their hands long ago a lever of political influence superior to that now wielded by the Social Democratic organisation, which is vast indeed as to numbers yet powerless as a practical legislative force.

A movement of a very different kind — co-operation — has taken firm root in Germany ; but many years of education and agitation were necessary before the working classes could be induced to take Schulze-Delitsch's efforts seriously. There are now, however, some seventeen thousand co-operative societies of all kinds ; though in Germany, as in England, there have been few experiments in productive co-operation, partly owing to the financial difficulty, and partly to lack of faith in the principle.

While excessive hours of work, and in many cases inadequate wages, keep the German working classes back, and debar them from the possibilities of social advancement which would otherwise be within their reach, an equal evil is the costliness and defective character of their homes. Perhaps in no country does the housing of the labourers and the poor better deserve to be characterised as a "burning question." In many large towns, working-men's families

are compelled to live under conditions which endanger health, and make even morality difficult. In the great majority of cases the homes in which working people dwell in such towns — crowded tenements of distressing atmosphere at best, though often dark and humid cellars — are the utter despair of social reformers. A workman in superior circumstances may secure for his family tolerable domestic surroundings by expending an unconscionably large part of his earnings on the one item of rent ; but there is a limit in rent-paying beyond which a working-man will not, cannot, should not have to go, and when this is reached, the dwelling has to be an inferior one ; which means, that the conditions under which he and those dependent on him live are not as favourable to the preservation of a high standard of life as they ought to be. Where the earnings are comparatively high an urban workman may be able to afford a house of three rooms, one a kitchen, but as a general rule two rooms have to serve for living, cooking, and sleeping, and in a great many instances the entire household economy is restricted to a single apartment. In all populous towns the labourers are found crowded in huge barracks, scores of families living in the same building, each with accommodation of the scantiest and unhealthiest character. When a workman, his wife, and his children are thus

"cribbed, cabined, and confined," the attractions of the public-house exert upon the head of the household a charm which is too evident to need remark.

Hence it is that bad housing, improvidence, intemperance, and crime go hand in hand. How completely the housing of the urban industrial classes is at the mercy of their pockets is proved by the following estimate, prepared some years ago, and now under rather than over the mark, of the percentage of income paid in rent alone in four of the largest German towns :

Yearly income.	Berlin.	Hamburg.	Breslau.	Leipzig.
Under £30 ..	41.6 ..	26.5 ..	28.7 ..	29.9
£30 to £60 ..	24.7 ..	23.5 ..	21.0 ..	21.2
£60 to £90 ..	21.8 ..	18.9 ..	20.8 ..	19.9

Taking the first two categories, as comprising the great bulk of the working classes, it appears that rent consumes, on the average, 33.1 per cent. of the total income in Berlin, 25 in Hamburg and Breslau, and 25.5 in Leipzig.

In small towns the housing conditions are, of course, far less objectionable, though everywhere the growth of an urban community has been found to have the general result of deteriorating the homes of the working classes and of diminishing that part of their wages which

should be devoted to food, clothing, and the miscellaneous necessities and conveniences of life. On the land a different order of things prevails. Here damp cellars and cold garrets are less met with, yet in some parts of the country an earthen floor is the rule rather than the exception in a labourer's cottage, and as soon as the more pressing problem of urban dwellings has been taken in hand, it will be found that even in the rural districts there is great room for improvement. A hopeful factor in the situation is the increasing interest which is taken in this question by employers of labour. A few years ago the employers who provided convenient and healthy homes for their work-people were few. To-day they are many, and the number increases. Krupps, who lay down great works and then build model towns for their employés, are, naturally, rare, but there are now few large industrial or mining concerns with which are not connected workmen's dwellings offering advantages superior, both in a hygienic and a monetary sense, to those which can be expected from private speculators. Building societies are also beginning to enter this field of social reform in the large towns.

There are other shady places to paint in this picture of the industrial working-man. One of the darkest is the habit of drinking, common to the lower strata of his class. I do not

say drunkenness, because in Germany excessive indulgence in alcoholic liquors is compatible with a condition which could only by exaggeration be described as inebriety. Brandy (*Schnapps*), of course, does its work everywhere the same, without respect of person, and where, as in North and East Prussia, dram-drinking is common, the statistics of industrial intemperance mount high. Yet, without getting absolutely drunk, the average working-man often spends on beer a far greater portion of his earnings than is just either to his health or to his hard-working wife and his large family.

The common dancing saloon is another source of evil. There are dancing-rooms of a certain respectability, but the average haunt is a place where delicacy, virtue, and chastity in man and woman are bartered in exchange for an evening's mad and furious riot. On Saturday evening (less nowadays on Sunday) young people crowd to these places after the fatiguing exertion of a long week of work, and plunge with passionate eagerness into their questionable delights. Resorting thither with weariness weighing upon body and spirit, with physical and moral system equally enervated, it is little wonder that the giddy dance and the excitement of physical pleasure stimulate unrestraint, and that the dancing evenings so often prove

ruinous to character and sends multitudes of young men and women into life under the burden of a curse.

The modern development of industry is also exerting the same disintegrating influence upon German family life which is noticeable in other countries. In the days of the old handicrafts the position of the young apprentice was far less free than is that of the young factory operative of to-day. He was generally bound for a certain number of years, during which time his place in the home of parent or employer was distinctly a dependent one. The discipline was useful, inasmuch as it had a tendency to tide the youth safely over the formative period of life, and the straitened circumstances in which he was apt to live helped the cultivation of habits of economy and providence. Besides, the knowledge that, all things being equal, his early years of tutelage and probation were but a stage on the way to journeymanship and mastership, gave him a respect for his position, and so for himself, which had a distinct moral value. But until he was professionally of age he continued subject both to his employer and to the ruling power at home, which then ruled indeed. Nowadays, however, there exists no genuine counterpart of the apprentice of old ; and parental government is rapidly going out of fashion. It is a common complaint that the

factory, by engaging so large an amount of juvenile labour and paying it (comparably with former times) so highly, has done away with youth in both sexes, and has fatally weakened both parental authority and the family tie. Young people never before became so early independent, or so early shook themselves free from the restraints and associations of home. The industrial districts of Germany are, in fact, having the same experience and are paying the same penalty which have already befallen countries of prior industrial development. From a very early age the young factory operative is master of his own destinies by virtue of his earning power, and he uses his independence with wisdom or folly according to the character and strength of the influences which played on him before he tasted the fruit of the dangerous tree of liberty. Here we have one reason — I grant it is not the only one — why there are continually seen flocking to the camp of Social Democracy crowds of young men whose heads are filled with crude and often wild notions, and who are the ready and credulous followers of any voluble prophet of a good time that is to come without any special exertion on their part.

The other sex has also a penalty of its own to pay. In the industrial classes the cultivation of the simple arts of domestic life is no longer

followed with the old interest and eagerness, for that is impossible. Sent out from the home to the factory and workshop as soon as the school years are over, the girl of thirteen or fourteen has little opportunity of learning the mastery of household management, and the effect is seen in the deterioration of domestic order and industry. Happily, this change for the worse has not been ignored, and serious efforts are being made to counteract it as far as possible. Greater attention is nowadays given to domestic economy in the elementary and continuation schools, not merely in the way of instilling a certain amount of theoretical knowledge of the chemical constitution of foods and the comparative digestibility of beef and bacon,—knowledge which is doubtless useful in its way, but which alone will never make a working-man's home happy,— but by careful practical instruction in housewifely duties, cooking, sewing, dressmaking, account-keeping, and domestic art and industry generally. In girls beyond school age countless benevolent institutions (called "Household Industry Societies" and the like) interest themselves to the same end all over the country.

But this is not the only kind of unselfish work which is nowadays done in Germany for the working classes, quite outside the ordinary philanthropic channels. The "Central Association for the Welfare of the Working Classes" and

the "Association for Social Politics" (I translate their names literally), both of which are national in scope, have accomplished results the importance of which it would be difficult to overestimate,—the one on practical lines, and the other by careful investigation into social and industrial questions, periodical conferences, and publications of a social-reform character. The former of these organisations circulates at least three cheap journals for the elevation and entertainment of the labouring classes—*The Workman's Friend, The People's Welfare,* and *Social Correspondence.* Much is done both by public and private bodies for popular education and the dissemination of good literature amongst the people by free libraries, reading-rooms, and circulating libraries. An excellent work in this way has for years been done by the Free German Institute, whose centre is Frankfort-on-the-Main, the Humboldt Academy of Berlin, which perpetuates the enlightened ideals of Wilhelm von Humboldt, one of the founders of Berlin University, the Gehe Institute of Dresden, the Coburg Lecture Association, and the Societies for the Extension of Popular Education. The Berlin Society bearing the last-named title collects second-hand books of an instructive character for presentation to backward villages where it is known that they will be welcome.

Curiously enough, however, the University

Extension movement, as understood in England, has not had a very prosperous career in Germany. In several university towns the movement has been established, but in others efforts in this direction have failed, and, in general, the movement has been received in a spirit of suspicion and hostility.

In the Conservative camp the fear is entertained that the working classes would be fortified in their Socialistic predispositions by the teaching of professors themselves tainted by economic heresy, while in the religious domain a large section of the Evangelical laity distrusts the, to them, impious criticism which advanced theological teachers are apt to pass upon the Sacred Writings. Yet the movement is spreading, and as time passes much of the present prejudice will be lived down. More consciously perhaps than in England, the University Extensionists are endeavouring to fulfil a distinct social as well as an educational purpose. The movement has been taken up in the belief that it will to some extent bridge over the chasm which divides the educated from the uneducated classes, and so create between the two an outward bond of sympathy which has hitherto been sadly lacking. The movement is, indeed, a sort of answer to the Socialist agitation. The Social Democratic party aims at economic equalisation,— the dispossessed millions are to be levelled up to the

possessing thousands by the levelling down of the latter. The aim of the friends of University Extension is not, indeed, intellectual or even educational equality, but to enable the less favoured sections of society to share more liberally in the resources of culture, which the lettered classes are too apt to regard as in a peculiar way their exclusive possession. The importance of such a social reconciliation as this aim, if realised, would effect is undeniable ; for, considerable as are the differences which the possession or non-possession of material wealth makes between men, they are, in reality, only outward and artificial, and at the utmost show themselves in things which leave untouched the true content and value of life. Infinitely greater are the differences of education and culture, which place men not merely in separate classes, but in separate worlds ; and it is the belief of the University Extensionists of Germany that the wider and more embracing the republic of knowledge can be made, the more will social antipathies be reduced, inasmuch as knowledge of necessity binds where wealth as surely divides. The expectation thus indulged may seem too sanguine, but the genuine philanthropy and fresh enthusiasm which are at the basis of this movement will doubtless carry its authors far on their mission of enlightenment and goodwill.

CHAPTER IV

RURAL LIFE AND LABOUR

WHILE the towns are given over to modern progress, and all of bad as well as good repute which the invidious term suggests, the rural districts go their quiet way as of old. It may be questioned whether anywhere in Europe a healthier, more moral life prevails than that which is to be met with in the little towns and villages of Germany. The life may be narrow and stunted, the intellectual outlook may be very limited, the ideals may be crude, and unchanging dulness may have claimed such places as its own, yet, if relative happiness, contentment, and freedom from anxiety belong to a rational scheme of life, the countryman and not the townsman is the true philosopher. In some districts a state of things exists which might appear to approach an ideal social order. Many villages still possess common land enough to afford to each head of a family free pasturage for both cattle and sheep, as well as forest which

not only provides their households with all necessary fuel, but, thanks to the right of selling timber, reduces local taxation to a minimum or liquidates it altogether. It might be an exaggeration to say "Once a peasant always a peasant," for the rustic who changes country for town life often shows a singular adaptability to urban conditions ; but the rural spirit is remarkably strong and tenacious, and, in spite of his transplanting, many a land-born metropolitan remains in every essential characteristic a villager to the end of his days.

I happened to know one such, and I have seldom come across a stronger individuality. The land offering him little prospect of meeting permanently even the modest needs of his frugal life—for his home was in one of the more backward agricultural districts of East Prussia — he threw up farming when nearing middle-age and migrated to Berlin, where he in time set up a small business of his own. He had carried this on for a generation when I knew him, and the one anxiety of his life was to save sufficient money to get back to the village of his younger days. The calling by which he earned his daily bread, and a little more when times were good, had no interest for him save in so far as it served this end. He hated towns and town life, and bore with his urban lot only because it offered the hope of release from it one day. He was highly intelligent, yet the affairs of State possessed

for him not a tithe of the interest which belonged to those of his native village. He kept himself thoroughly informed of all that took place there ; he knew all the new-comers by name and all who passed away ; he read his *Dorf-Zeitung* (*Village Gazette* — a popular little newspaper devoted to peasant life) with scrupulous regularity, and treasured the past volumes as though they had been rare first editions ; in a word, he was heart and soul a *Landmann*, and in temperament was the beau-ideal of rural tranquillity and unsophisticated innocence, though so large a part of his life had been passed in the capital. When I knew him he was not far from the realisation of his ambition. His savings were nearly sufficient for the support of his declining years, and before long he hoped to go back to the little village in East Prussia whence he had regretfully come, and, settled there, he intended to begin life again at seventy.

As with individuals so with communities : the old order fights tenaciously against the new. There are yet to be found, scattered all over Germany, towns even of quite respectable size and importance which yet, in all outward appearance, have failed to embrace the modern spirit, and seem, in their old-world sleepiness, simplicity, and primness, like relics of a bygone social order. You may pass through the streets of such a town and never know, from any

external evidence, that either shop or warehouse ministers to local needs. Places of the kind are there in number sufficient, but there is not a sign-board, much less a display of goods, to denote their whereabouts,—nothing, in fact, to distinguish them on the outside from private dwellings. The streets are cobbled right across from house to house; well-kept gardens grace the homes of the tradesman and labourer alike; there are no obtrusive hoardings, no sky-signs, no placards of any kind, save the decorous announcements of the administrative or police authorities,—in a word, the bill-sticker's art, whether in its higher or lower forms, is entirely unappreciated. In many parts of rural Germany you will find the night-watchman still a respected institution, and as you pass a sleepless night you may hear the hours cried in quaint verse, that recalls the old-fashioned English waits of Christmas time. Here is such a cry, freely translated:

> "Listen, gentles, while I tell
> The parish clock has just struck one,
> Mind your fires, your lights as well,
> That to the town no harm be done."

Injunctions of this sort date, of course, from the time when wood and thatch were the common building material, even for houses of a better class; but though the watchman's nocturnal

patrol serves now no practical purpose, the energy of local custom is so persistent that the superfluous functionary survives. Even in the largest towns imposing officials of the kind continue still to descend upon the streets at a certain hour of the night, and, clad in huge overcoats and distinctive head-dress, with sabre on side and massive keys dangling from the waist, go from house to house, carefully locking the outer doors.

Nor has the old-fashioned rural costume by any means disappeared. The traveller who transects Germany by one of the great trunk lines passing from west to east or from north to south is pretty sure to be attracted at some station or other by quaintly attired countrymen or countrywomen. But in order to see the peasant costumes at their best, it is necessary to leave the beaten tracks, and go inland, to sleepy villages in sequestered valleys or away amongst the hills,—in the Bavarian Highlands, in the Black Forest, in the Spree Forest, or Mecklenburg. The variety of dress is remarkable, and happily rural life still possesses such a strong individuality that, in spite of the ridicule which they frequently meet in towns, the older peasants show little disinclination to discard their traditional attire in favour of the unromantic and inartistic garments which modern fashion devises for the disfigurement of the human form divine. Here and there, of

course, extravagances in rural costume are found, as in a district of the Grand Duchy of Baden, where the pride or vanity of the peasant woman centres in the huge proportions of her hat, which is often so enveloped in *pompons* as to weigh several pounds. But in general the *Volkstracht* is an innocent survival of the primitive epoch of peasant life which it were good policy carefully to cultivate. The artificiality of modern civilisation makes everywhere for uniformity, and the distinctive customs of the country are not now so numerous that any one —let its character only be harmless—can be wisely surrendered to the prejudice or intolerance of an unthinking age. Happily, efforts are being made in many parts of Germany to perpetuate the costumes of long ago, by encouraging their use both by old and young.

Even where primitive simplicity is disappearing amongst the people, indelible memories of its past influence still exist in their midst. In many a rural village in South Germany may be read upon the timbers of the houses the texts and quaint proverbs in which a former age used to express its natural piety and mother wit. Sometimes these carved sayings take a less amiable form, as in a *noli me tangere* verse like the following :

> "Ich achte meine Hasser
> Gleich wie das Regenwasser,

Dass von den Dächern fliesst;
Ob sie mich gleich neiden,
So müssen sie doch leiden
Dass Gott mein Helfer ist,"

which may be translated:

"My enemies are to me
Just like the rain
Which falls from the roof.
Though they should envy me,
They must at least learn
That God is my helper."

Again:

"Wer übel redet von mir und den Meinen,
Der gehe nach Haus und betrachte die Seinen;
Find't er um denen kein Gebrechen,
So kann er frei von mir und den Meinen sprechen."

A free translation would be:

"Who thinks evil of me and mine,
Let him go home and examine his own;
If there he finds no fault,
Then he is at liberty to criticise us."

The class-consciousness of the peasant—an excellent quality, not everywhere found—finds utterance in verses of this kind;

"Wenn doch Gott und der Bauer nicht wär,
Ständen Länder und Scheuern leer,
D'rum danke Gott ein jeder Mann,
Dass Scheuer und Land Gott segnen kann,"

or:

"If God and the peasant did not exist
Lands and barns would all be empty,
So let everyone thank Heaven
That God can bless both barn and land."

Superstition and ancient rural customs keep a powerful hold upon the peasantry everywhere, and many a quaint observance of venerable origin is still kept up, though its meaning has been forgotten. For example, the witches' dance on the Brocken, which popular credulity has always associated with Walpurgis Night (April 30–May 1), has left a curious relic in many parts of Saxony, and the most drastic police measures have failed altogether to discourage it. On this night the young folk persist in discharging firearms wholesale, in carrying burning besoms and torches about the hills, and in kindling Walpurgis and St. John's fires,—the modern representation of the raid which was made upon the witches when they gathered of old for their mad capers. Belief in witchcraft is far from extinct ; and while a peasant will disavow the credulity of his fathers, he will not omit to hide a piece of elder wood in his stables and stalls, and to plant it before the doors, as a defence against occult evil influence. The custom which obtains in some parts of sending the cattle into the pasture for the first time on the 1st of May bears unconscious witness to the older fear of witchcraft.

The celebration of harvest takes a prominent place in the social amenities of the country. Formerly it was the great festive event of the year, both for peasant and labourer. One or

more days were entirely given over to merriment and good cheer, and the farmer and his man met on equal terms at the dance, the game, and the well-spread board, as at no other time in the year. Of late years some of the customs of harvest have fallen into disuse, partly owing to the less friendly relationships which exist between the rural classes, and partly because the labourer is becoming superior to the simple pleasures which were enough for his fathers, yet in the more unsophisticated parts of the country they still continue. In Wurtemberg these celebrations include ancient customs in which the maidservants of the farms alone take part. One is a race ; dressed in short frocks and white bodices, but with naked feet, they scour the countryside, and the winner is held in high honour amongst admiring swains. Another is a pitcher-carrying competition, in which a large vessel, filled to the brim with water, must be borne on the head for a certain distance without assistance by the hands. In Alsace farmer and labourer change places for the day. The latter is absolved from service of every kind, and the farmer both waits on his men and does all the necessary farm work. The day is given over to feasting and sports, and ends with a long night of dancing. Dancing is, in fact, the most popular of country amusements, and is carried on to such an extent — as a rule in the

A FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE

Knaus

village inn — as to have become a source of grave anxiety to those who are concerned for village morality.

The old marriage customs, too, are still popular. The bridal race, which once was common to rural England, is observed in many parts of Germany, doubtless perpetuating the ancient rule which required that a maid should be carried off on horseback. In Prussia the custom was varied, in that the race followed the day of marriage. Husband and wife raced to a given place, after which the bridal-wreath was taken from the wife's head and a *coiffure* of the kind common to her locality was placed thereon instead, — in unchivalrous reminder that the time of poetry was over and the time of prose had begun. Throughout Germany the eve before marriage is devoted to festivities in which the relatives and the near friends of the nuptial pair take part, but the name of the festival, *Polterabend*, denotes its descent from a custom of a very different kind. *Polter* means noise (being really the equivalent of the colloquial English "row"), and the explanation of the term is curious but very human. On the day before a marriage it was usual for kind busybodies to canvass the virtues and failings of the bride and bridegroom. Did the virtues clearly preponderate, they signified their good-will by visiting the nuptial house and by means of hideous

noises scaring away the evil spirits which were supposed to lurk there. The windows were carefully locked and the door alone left open, for by this lawful way only the uncanny guests were required to depart. From attic to cellar water was sprinkled in every corner of the house, all the walls were beaten with sticks, and ridiculous imprecations were used wherewith to terrorise the unhappy ghosts. If the past careers of the bridal pair gave room for legitimate cavil, this found expression in boisterous demonstrations before the houses of both, something after the manner of the "stang-riding" which is still common to the Yorkshire dales. In rural Germany the original associations of *Polter-abend* are still in part retained in all their noisiness, but in the towns the evening is devoted to social intercourse, in which music, theatricals, games, and innocent gossip take the chief place.

On the land, where time is no consideration and festivities of the kind happen too seldom to be taken lightly, the wedding parties are often spread over several days, and everybody has a share in turn. The following food was actually consumed not long ago during the marriage festivities of a well-to-do farmer on the Weser:—one fat cow, seven pigs, seventeen calves, two hundred and twenty hens, two hundred loaves and cakes, three hundred and seventy gallons of beer, and a large quantity of spirit

and wine. Amongst the Black Forest peasantry exists still a peculiar plan (called *Leibgeding* or *Libding*) of transferring a holding from father to son. When an old peasant is no longer capable of heavy work, or wishes to make way for a son or daughter desiring to marry, he gives up his farm to his heir and successor in consideration of an agreement that he and his wife shall have a place in the house and food enough for the rest of their days. This arrangement is put on paper, and legally attested, for the Black Forest peasant is long-headed, and never believes what he cannot see.

On the economic side, rural life in Germany presents to-day many difficult problems with whose solution the prosperity of agriculture is very closely bound up. There, as in England, the constant decrease of the rural population has created a dearth of labour, which of late years has threatened to make successful farming impossible. How far this displacement of population has gone may be judged from the fact that between the years 1871 and 1895 the rural population of the Empire, as officially so defined, had decreased by nearly a million, though the total population increased to the extent of ten and a half millions during that period. In the northern parts of the Empire, holdings have as a result been amalgamated on a large scale, and the wages which farmers have nowa-

days to pay—though not so high as those ruling in the more prosperous parts of England—are a source of growing perplexity.

At the best the financial position of the landed classes is no brilliant one. It is estimated that the large estates in Prussia are on an average mortgaged to the extent of seventy per cent. of their market value, though the percentage is far higher in the provinces of East Prussia and Pomerania. The peasant properties are less encumbered, though these, too, are mortgaged to the average amount of forty per cent. But dear labour, and a serious lack of that, with diminishing capital and keen foreign competition in corn, have created an agricultural crisis which promises to produce very disastrous results.

The causes which have contributed to the migration of population to the towns are in part identical with those which have operated in other lands. Briefly, the rural labourer is dissatisfied with the life, labour, and earnings which the country offers, and he both seeks and finds better conditions and better prospects in the large industrial centres. It has been found that military service has the effect of decreasing the amount of labour which would normally be available for agricultural pursuits. The country recruit performs his two years of service in town, and it happens not seldom that the attractions of urban life acquire so strong a hold upon

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him that he is unwilling, at the expiration of his term of military training, to return to the quiet and monotony of rural life.

On the land the labourer's lot is seldom an enviable one, and in the more backward parts of the country it is excessively hard, and often intolerable. In the main, the modes of agricultural employment prevalent in North Germany may be classed under three systems. The freest and most modern is the hired-labour system of Westphalia, which approximates most closely to the English system. The system peculiar to Saxony is that of the peasant-labourer, who, besides working for a large farmer, cultivates land of his own. Finally, in the provinces east of the Elbe, where the labourers are largely Poles, the manorial system widely prevails, and here such economic freedom as is enjoyed is theoretical rather than real.

The German agricultural labourer has hitherto been untouched by the spirit of combination which has been popularised among industrial labourers, and the result is not to his advantage. Complaints of overwork, low wages, and entire lack of leisure are common, and so far as these complaints are justified the farmers have only themselves to blame for the dearth of labour which they lament ; for not only are they unwilling to pay wages at all approximating those which their men might obtain in the adjacent

towns, but they have in many districts cut the ground beneath their own feet by importing cheap and inferior Polish labour, which has been regarded by the native labourer as a notice to quit, which notice has been acted upon accordingly. At the best, the wages paid in the country are poor, for 2*s.* and 2*s.* 6*d.* a day is a high rate, and the average would be nearer 1*s.* 6*d.* for a man and 1*s.* for his wife, when all available time is devoted to the work of the farm. Polish labourers can be had at any time and in any number at the rate of 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per day, with potatoes to eat and sacking to sleep on thrown in, but experience proves that cheap labour of the kind is dear in the end. There are districts where farm labourers are kept in the field from earliest daylight until late at night in return for a meagre 6*d.* per day with food.

Then the relationship between the farmer and his hinds is also far from being as sympathetic as in earlier days, and the tendency, as in England, is more and more for the farmer to cut himself off from his dependants. The effect is seen in many ways. Work is harder, and there is less respite from its pressure than formerly. Holidays would seem to be going out of fashion. It used to be a very customary thing for a small agricultural town to have at least its four markets in the year, its church dedication day, holidays of three days each at Christmas, Easter, and

Whitsuntide, with two prayer and penance days, not to speak of casual days and holy days, —say three weeks in the year in all,—but nowadays people are too serious to waste so much time, and the labourer does not like the change, which keeps him more closely at the wheel. This aspect of the question, however, does not merely apply to the smaller farmers. There is a general lament in these days that rural labour fails to receive the recognition and respect which it both desires and deserves. The vocabulary of the German manufacturer does not contain the English abomination "hands," a word now so thoroughly naturalised that factory operatives in the north of England use it when speaking of themselves ; yet the term *Gesinde,* in which the landed proprietor and gentleman farmer of Germany group their employés or "people" (*Leute*), indicates an undesirable spirit of disparagement. There is too much truth in the recently published lament of a German rural pastor, that "the feeling that they are, because of their social condition, regarded and treated with contempt by those from whom they earn their daily bread weighs like an Alp upon the rural labouring population." "You should not fear me, you should love me," Frederick the Great is said to have told two Jews whom he was soundly thrashing. But flagellation, however well meant, is a form of benevolence whose success is at best doubtful. If the

German landed proprietors desire to win the genuine attachment of their labourers, they will have to banish all the thoughts of the old days of serfdom which linger in the minds of many of their number.

Even when rural labourers are best treated there is a secret disposition on the part of the work-givers to regard them as in a sense morally bound to remain to the end of life in the manor or village where they were born, and not a few landowning deputies, who are returned to the Imperial and State Diets year after year, would willingly vote for a measure that would make that imaginary obligation a legal one. Such aspirations are, of course, visionary, yet their very existence is an evil. So firmly convinced are the landed classes that the tillers of the soil absolutely exist for them, and that a man who is born an agricultural labourer should in duty remain such and train his sons and daughters to follow in his footsteps, that the newspapers which represent agrarian interests are continually calling upon the Governments to convert the rural schools into institutions for the production of tractable peasants. "Let geography, drawing, and science go," said the most important of these journals recently, "and let the time thus saved be devoted to religious instruction, so that the children may be trained in obedience, industry, and piety, and thus make good labourers."

It is evident that men who hold such views have much to learn, and more to unlearn. In the remoter agricultural districts, where large manorial estates are the rule, something like the old feudal relationship does, indeed, prevail, so far as modern legislative restrictions have not abolished it. Here is a sample of the sort of agreement which many a patriarchal landowner makes with a labourer and his family, for he engages them together,—man, wife, and children, so far as the latter are able to work :

"The lord of the manor offers his labourer a dwelling, with sixty square roods of garden-ground and fifty square roods of potato-ground, for £3 15*s*. a year, paid weekly by deductions from wages of 1*s*. 6*d*. per week, and will pay his railway fare, provided that he and the members of his family remain in service for at least two years. He may not, however, keep either cow or goat ; but, on the other hand, the lord of the manor will sell him new milk at 1*d*. per litre (a pint and three-quarters), and skimmed milk at ½*d*. He may, however, keep a pig and a few hens, but no dogs, and bed straw and litter in reasonable quantity will be provided free. The labourer must pay for his own food of all kinds, also for doctor and apothecary, but the services of a midwife will be provided free. Fuel will be conveyed for him within a radius of five miles at the rate of 3*s*. per load. Seed potatoes will

also be supplied at the rate of *6d.* per square rood. The labourer must make all repairs to the house of which he is capable, materials being supplied to him for the purpose. The lord of the manor, or his agent, reserves the right to visit and inspect the labourer's dwelling at all times.

"The labourer will bind himself, with the rest of the members of his family who live on the estate, to work only for the lord of the manor. For this work he will receive payment as follows: winter half year, 1*s.* 6*d.* per day; summer half year, 1*s.* 9*d.* per day, with 6*d.* a day extra during six weeks of harvest. Young men (his sons) over twenty years of age will receive 9*d.* per day in winter and 1*s.* in summer, but no addition during harvest."

Under such a contract, the money income of husband and wife, even assuming work and wages to be unintermittent throughout the whole year, could hardly be called brilliant for the beginning of the twentieth century. Even supposing that all Sundays and holidays were paid for, the man would only earn £30 12*s.* and his wife £15 18*s.*, together £46 10*s.*

But the system of payment in kind is gradually breaking down. Even the Polish labourers, who are at the lowest stage of social development, clamour more and more for money wages, and will accept payment—provided only it be in coin

—so low as to be incapable of supporting German labourers in a decent standard of life. In the Polish parts of Prussia the state of things prevailing leaves much to be desired. There Polish men and woman are engaged indiscriminately on the work of the large farms, and the general conditions as to employment and discipline are more suggestive of slave plantations than of a modern free labour relationship. Rigorous employers do not hesitate to rule literally with the rod and whip, and an utterly brutal and brutalising *régime* is by no means uncommon. A leading Berlin newspaper recorded this incident several years ago :

"Upon a manorial estate in West Prussia some forty Polish women are employed. These people could no longer bear their terrible ill-usage, for they were treated like cattle, and they resolved to seek release in flight, which they did by taking the night train to Berlin. No sooner, however, was their flight discovered on the estate than word of it was sent to the police there, with the result that two police waggons were in waiting for the party at the station on their arrival, and in these they were placed and conveyed to prison. The scene was heart-breaking as they were arrested, for the women did not understand a word of German, and no interpreter was present to help them. They showed the results of ill-usage on their bodies, which were

bruised black and blue by reason of the heavy blows administered to them with sticks while at work."

The incident admits of no doubt. I have myself heard from friends who have lived in the Polish districts similar stories of the drastic discipline which prevails on some of the large estates there. On the other hand, the type of Pole who is employed in farm labour is extremely low. Drunkenness, theft, idleness, and the most degrading forms of immorality are lamentably common, and the average labourer will only work when he is compelled. Comparisons made in certain parts of the eastern provinces of Prussia, where German, Polish, and Russian labourers work together, have proved the ratio of capability and of wages to be about 12 : 6 : 3. How far these unhappy people, members of a race which has known better days, and yet indulges high ambitions, are the victims of their conditions—have, in fact, been made what they are by circumstances—is a question with which I am not competent to deal.

It is the Pole who comes to the front again in connexion with a labour movement which is known as *Sachsengängerei*,—literally, "going to Saxony,"—a vast annual migration of Polish labourers which takes place in harvest time. The institution has of late years developed into a "social problem," owing to the serious

displacement of native labour and the hunger-wages the supplanters are contented to receive. The large landowners like the arrangement well enough, though it is not without objectionable features, for the Polish "Saxony-goers" (they are of both sexes) lead the most miserable of existences. Their wages are of the smallest, their work heavy and exhausting, while of their scanty earnings the employment agents are not slow to claim an extortionate share. These wretched people are housed or herded in mean quarters,—sheds, barns, wooden structures of any handy kind,—and they are regarded as mere machines, out of which as much work as possible has to be got during the shortest time for the least possible pay.

All sorts of measures have been proposed of late years for checking the migration of population to the towns. There is a large parliamentary party which would require any rural resident wishful to leave his native place to furnish proof that he is able to set up a household for himself and family in his contemplated place of settlement, with the proviso that he should be liable to be sent back to his old home directly he ceased to be an independent citizen. But Germany, with characteristic common-sense, is attempting to deal with this problem by practical methods, instead of talking about impossible ones until irreparable mischief has been done.

Such are the efforts which are being made in connexion with the "Home Colonisation" (*Innere Colonisation*) movement. Legislative provision now exists in Prussia whereby small holdings, suitable for labourers, can be acquired by the aid of State loans advanced on reasonable terms, both as to interest and repayment of principal ; and already a good work has been done in this way.

Much is also being done to ameliorate the conditions of rural life by the provision of better dwellings for the labouring class,—a reform which has for long years been overdue. A large number of building societies, established on either a mutual or a benevolent basis, advance money for this purpose, and build houses, and either let or sell them, according to the tenant's desire. This movement has also been greatly facilitated by the permission which has been given to employ, in its aid, a certain part of the vast invested funds of the State Industrial Insurance Corporations. These funds now amount to some £40,000,000, and are yearly increasing ; how to employ them advantageously had long been a perplexing problem ; and this outlet for investment has proved not less beneficial to the insurance authorities themselves than to the object assisted. Furthermore, care is being taken more than ever to bring the aid of technical instruction to bear upon rural

industry, and the value of the school-garden, as a means of preparing rural children for an agricultural life, has for years been recognised. The press of population from country to town will not be altogether stayed, but the many and various efforts which are being made to counteract it may at least prevent the evil from getting entirely out of hand. Such a result will be to the untold advantage of the whole country, for the agrarian population not only constitutes the nation's backbone physically, but it is also a bulwark of social order ; and, in the present condition of Germany, the presence of this great reserve of moral strength and stability is a national blessing.

CHAPTER V

MILITARY SERVICE

IN Germany the army is the nation in a literal sense. According to the letter of the law, every male subject is liable to be called on to serve when he has completed his seventeenth year, and the liability continues to the end of his forty-fifth year. The term of service in the standing army is seven years, and it usually begins with the twenty-first year. Two years (instead of three, as formerly) are now passed with the colours, after which the time-expired soldier passes by successive stages into the first reserve, the *Landwehr*, and finally into the *Landsturm*. This last is the army of emergency, comprising all male citizens between the ages of seventeen and forty-five who do not belong to the army or navy, and it is only intended to be called up in the event of the regular forces proving insufficient for home defence. Though the obligation to serve his country under arms applies to every able-bodied German save the

members of reigning and mediatised houses—who, nevertheless, are seldom slow to act upon the principle of *noblesse oblige*—the law is applied with all possible leniency. Physical weakness, even of a slight character, exempts, of necessity ; but the sole bread-winners of families, theological students, and even the sons of farmers, tradespeople, and others who cannot easily be spared from home, are also excused. Further latitude is allowed by the enrolment of what are known as "one-year volunteers," who enjoy a curtailed service in consideration of their satisfying certain high educational requirements, and undertaking to clothe, maintain, and house themselves during their year with the colours without cost to the State.

The oppressive burden which is imposed upon Germany by its huge military system would appear to possess perennial interest for English moralists of a certain class. The curious thing is that a good deal more is said and written, preached and pamphleteered, on the subject in England than in the country concerned,—one illustration among many of her national habit of tendering advice on other people's affairs without invitation, need, or knowledge. The fact is that the military and naval budgets of the German Empire fall far below those of England. The former (taking the highest published estimate) reached a total of £39,624,964 for the year

1898–99, made up of £33,431,128 for the army, and £6,193,836 for the navy. The English defensive budgets amounted for the same financial year to £22,359,599 for the army, and £24,-733,822 for the navy, a total of £47,093,421, or £7,478,464 more than the total for the German Empire with nearly fifteen millions more population.

It may be said that, although the direct cost to the national treasury of the army and navy is far greater per head in England than in Germany, the difference is more than made up by the fact that Germany maintains a standing army at least twice larger than the English army and navy together, insomuch as over half a million men are continuously withdrawn from private life and employments, and kept in barracks. That is quite true ; and it is here, of course, that the economic disadvantage of Germany's system of universal service shows itself. What the loss thus caused means can only be conjectured, yet, though real enough, it is impossible that it can be so obstructive to industrial progress and so destructive to national wealth as it is generally represented. If the purely commercial argument against universal military service held water, there would not be so much justification for the complaint, nowadays so common, of German competition in the home and world markets. Besides, if this argument were con-

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clusive, and the unmixed economic curse it is supposed to be out of Germany, the last thing that England ought to desire is that Germany should reduce its armaments, and leave its young men to pursue their natural course undisturbed in the factories and on the land.

The fact is that the system of universal service has grown into the very life of the nation. That it does not impede industry to the extent that might be supposed is due to its priority to the economic development of the country as we know it. Hence, industry has merely had to accommodate itself to a condition of things which existed long before it laid claim to the energies of the people. Were a country like England to go over to universal service, its social and industrial life would have to be remodelled in every direction, and the consequences would be disturbing beyond estimation. Germany has been spared any revolution of the kind, because it imposed upon itself this yoke at a time when it entailed no great hardship, and habit and time have now entirely accustomed the bearers to the burden. Moreover, compensating circumstances of very real value exist. The thousands of young Germans who are every year taken from industry and trade are sent back better, more efficient, more intelligent citizens in every way than they were before. Moreover, they

are not thrown indiscriminately upon the market, but to a large extent go back to their old positions. In the case of non-commissioned officers, the State itself undertakes to provide employment on the completion of twelve years of honourable service, and the postal, railway, police, customs, and inland-revenue departments furnish all the posts that are necessary. The personal advantages, both physical and moral, of military service are certainly great. On this subject I cannot do better than repeat what I wrote some years ago. In the army a young man is put to a rigorous test of endurance, and if he passes through it successfully, his *physique* is established for life. The comment is often made that the strong are strengthened and the weak weakened by this ordeal. But this is an unfair way of putting the matter. It is true that the robust man as a rule receives only benefit ; but it far oftener happens that weak constitutions are built up than pulled down at the end of the one or two years' service. For the physically incapable are not taken into the army at all, and so abundant is the supply of recruits yearly that the authorities can afford to interpret the conditions of exemption liberally. This argument of physical benefit would, of course, be far less applicable to a country like England, whose youths make up for the absence of military training by manly outdoor exercises

unknown on the Continent, but in Germany it is of untold value.

The effect upon rural labourers of their two years in the army is marvellous. Look on the two pictures. It is recruiting time, and every day brings fresh train-loads of countrymen to town. In long file they walk from the station to the barracks. And how they walk! As only the field labourer can,—bowed and bent, with heavy, awkward, slouching gait, the very picture of ungracefulness. The accompanying subaltern does not look over-proud of his charges, but he is comforting himself with the thought that he will soon "change all that." They are neatly dressed, though, these village lads, for this is a notable day that brings them to the great city, with its unknown life. Some dangle ribbons from their buttonholes, some wear flowers fresh from the meadow, some have decked their hats with oak leaves, just to show that they are not ashamed of their country origin. Their baggage is small: a red pocket-handkerchief, slung over the shoulder, carries all that a man needs to bring with him, for his future dress, from helmet to socks and shoes, is ready for him in the barracks. For the most part they are a happy lot, though here and there one may see a face that says as plainly as words could do that the pangs of homesickness are already gnawing at the heart. Yet it is their

undisciplined rawness that most strikes the townsman, accustomed as he is every day to watch the orderly march past of garrison troops. Six months later the same peasants pass along the same streets, now wearing the Emperor's uniform. But how different the carriage ! Now they march ; before they waddled. To the clear note of the trumpet and the brisk beat of the drum, the regiment treads with firm, united, and graceful step. Line after line passes, as straight in its progress as though a steel rod ran through it. It is veritable music of movement, and one would not believe, unless he knew it, that scattered amongst this band of troops are the rude, uncultured, unfashioned countrymen who not long ago shambled along in supreme disorder.

The moral aspect of military service is two-sided, though the preponderant effect is unquestionably good. The discipline of the barracks and the drill-ground is undergone in the critical time in a young man's life when he decides, by habits no less than deliberate option, whether his future is to be characterised by self-control, by regard for order and obedience, and by a lawful instead of a lawless liberty. In passing through this crisis he is greatly helped by temporary life in the army. Its restraint, good in itself, is doubly valuable to him. He may chafe under it, but the very chafing is part of a

wholesome, stimulating discipline, whose effects extend beyond the period of his service. Many a youth is saved from ruin — made a man — by his term of military experience. While the Emperor's uniform is upon him, he must simply *obey,* be he count or clown, heir to opulence or heir to poverty,—for both serve side by side. Let his character be as stubborn and uncontrolled as it may when he enters the ranks, he nevertheless finds out before an hour has gone that in the barracks only one will can exist. It may be the will of colonel, or captain, or lieutenant, or even of an uneducated, loud-mouthed sergeant, but it can never be his. The unaccustomed restraint is bound to be salutary. It teaches self-control, submission, patience ; while those who need the lesson learn also how to be orderly and scrupulously cleanly. It may be said that discipline is a good thing in its way, but we can have too much of it, and that an excess militates against the formation of a free, independent, and sturdy character. This objection is valid in the abstract, but the danger of modern times, when rebellion against authority is observable in so many directions, is less the restriction of liberty than the extension of licence, and the introduction of military subordination would, to-day, be perhaps most salutary in quarters where it is least likely to become welcome.

Moreover, the common assertion — common,

that is, out of Germany — that military service is unpopular, is simple nonsense. The institution which, next to the throne, is most popular in Germany, is the army. Its popularity runs through all classes of the population, and so does the popularity of what is wrongly called in England the "conscription." If this "conscription" meant what the word implies,—the enrolment, by lot or otherwise, of only a part of the able-bodied young men of the nation,— military service would probably be heartily detested. But the fact of the obligation to serve being universal, without distinction of rank or class, makes that an honour which would otherwise be felt a harsh duty. The recruit knows that he only does what every one of his countrymen, if eligible, either has done, is doing, or will do; and this consciousness of equality reconciles him to every sacrifice which is laid upon him. It would be idle to deny that many persons regard the service as onerous, for the long roll of those who courageously flee their country rather than do their duty to it would falsify such a denial. It may also be conceded that many who may not seek to escape from this obligation to the State discharge it grudgingly and of necessity. But this may safely be said,—that while military service entails considerable hardship and a certain disappointment of plans and prospects, the number of those one-year or even two-year recruits

who carry into life any grudge against the army, or who regard their association with it other than with feelings of pride and gratification, is exceedingly small. Even working-men, upon whom military service might seem to press most heavily, are as warmly attached to the army as are the sons of officers themselves. Now and then a growling deserter kicks at the pricks because his hiding-place has been found out, and he is compelled to do the duty which he had shirked, and, straightway, airs his dissatisfaction in unpatriotic contributions to foreign publications. But testimony from such sources may safely be rejected. The man who will attack his country and his country's institutions for the mere amusement of the outside world is not likely to be the most credible, as he is certainly not the most creditable, of witnesses.

Yet, when these legitimate advantages have been claimed for the military training which German youth undergoes, and when the undoubted popularity of the service is admitted, it would be absurd to pretend that Germany maintains its vast army from the mere love of numbers, or is in a peculiar way imbued with the martial spirit. It is easy for a country like England, secure against attack by its insular position and its command of the sea, to deplore the waste of human energy and material treasure which is represented when an entire nation is under arms,

but the German regards these superior reflections as particularly ungracious, and replies that England, instead of unkindly criticising, should be grateful for her own privileged position. Moreover, how often do the critics of universal service take account of the fact that Germany, with all its soldiers, is in reality less a military country than England is a naval country ! To reduce the matter to plain figures, while Germany's standing army, in numbers, is roughly as two to one when compared with that of England, England's navy is as five to one when compared with the German navy as it stands in the present year (say, a hundred and ten thousand men and a hundred and sixty-five battleships and armoured cruisers for England, and twenty-three thousand men and twenty-seven battleships and armoured cruisers for Germany). The simple explanation is that England and Germany have both armed themselves where they are most vulnerable,—in the one case on sea, in the other on land. With powerful States both to east and west of it, jealous of its prestige, hating it, if the truth were known, with a perfect hatred, each ready to pounce on it,—if only the other would first knock it down,—Germany must be perpetually *en vedette*. It dare not risk a less degree of security than that of its neighbours. As they arm themselves, so must the Empire arm itself; the larger their battalions

become, the larger must be its. It is a lamentable relationship to exist between civilised States, only less lamentable than war itself. But here is the position, and neither demonstration of its economic evil nor moralising of the most impassioned order will at present ameliorate matters. The question which Germany has to face is not one of economics or ethics, but of its very life as a nation, its independence as a State. It knows that only by being prepared for war can it be sure of peace, and it bears the cost of its armaments willingly. After all, an army expenditure of thirty-three millions a year is economy itself when compared with the permanent result of an unfavourable war.

To-day the genius and proficiency of the German imperial army represents the accumulated results of a century's military training, unintermittent, whether the years have been years of war or of peace. Yet it is Prussia and the brilliant commanders and tacticians whom it has given to the army that have brought about this condition of comparative perfection. "Prussia contributes more soldiers than all the other States combined; and not only has it during the last hundred years been disciplined in a severer school of war than any other European country, but its citizens have for ninety of these years lived under the obligation of universal military service." It was the Frenchman Talleyrand who

said *On peut tout faire avec les bayonettes excepté s'y asseoir.* But it was contemporary generals and statesmen of Prussia who recognised that even bayonets only became effective weapons when used with skill. "The Prussian army is demoralised by peace," said Gneisenau; "if you want to be a military State, you must engage in war, for war is an art, and every art needs practice." Thus came about the edict, now almost a hundred years old, which required every capable son of Prussia to study and learn the use of arms. With such a long military tradition, the wonder is that there is not more of the fighting spirit in the Prussians. The great secret of the efficiency and the incomparable discipline of the German army is the cultivation of a deep sense of direct personal responsibility in all its officers, from the highest to the lowest. Each in his own province exercises an authority which is virtually unlimited. For though authority travels downward from commander-in-chief, through all the grades of rank, to captain, and from him farther downward to under-officers of various degree, each recipient of orders knows that no one can come between him and his responsibility. Moreover, wide freedom of action is allowed to each officer as to the methods by which the desired results are to be obtained. "Every commander, from the captain upwards, is responsible for the training of his men, according to regulation, and

must, therefore, be as little restricted as possible in the choice of means." So run the drill regulations; though the necessary rider is added, "The immediate superiors are bound to interfere, in case either of mistakes or want of progress." Thus the principle adopted is that of unity in things essential, but liberty in all others, and the principle has been found to work admirably. The unfriendly critic may point to the abuse of power which is occasionally brought home to the non-commissioned officers. Many of these men undoubtedly inflict upon the privates under their charge hardship, and even cruelty, such as would, if their conduct came to light, entail upon them severe punishment and dismissal from an army of whose reputation they are not worthy. It is, of course, the slow and obtuse recruits who mostly suffer in these cases, — the raw countryman, who has never before learned the right use of his limbs; the obstinate labourer, to whom agility is so desperately hard of attainment. Yet, however dull and backward his men may be, the non-commissioned officer is, within the limits laid down by his superiors, responsible for their progress. They must be made to learn the drill, to acquire the requisite celerity, however unnatural it may be to them, and to attain the full efficiency of the company to which they belong. And so the poor rustic, who can plough a straight furrow though he

cannot for his life dress up to the line, who can handle a fork or swing a flail with ease and grace though he cannot shoulder his rifle briskly, finds the first few months of barrack-life hard and galling. Arbitrary punishments are inflicted by irascible under-officers, who are often men without refinement, or even humane instincts, and who, finding themselves dressed in brief authority, magnify and abuse their power. But such abuse is the exception, and when discovered it is sternly repressed. The general treatment of the rank and file is considerate and kindly. The exercises may at times be severe, and the manœuvres are always intensely fatiguing. Yet the attitude of the commissioned officer towards his men is everything that could be desired, and, in return, the loyalty of the common soldier to his superior is complete, and his obedience, patience, and endurance worthy of the best military traditions."

It is unfortunate that the same cordial relationship does not invariably exist between the officer and the civil public. Friction is of frequent occurrence, and not seldom the wrong is demonstrably on the military side. The officers, in fact, constitute an exclusive caste, and the general feeling entertained towards civilians, save those of State official rank, is one of depreciation and even worse. It is an anomalous attitude to hold, seeing that the civilians, after all, keep the

military machine going, and that most of them have at one time or another taken their place in the army. There is also a decided tendency for officers to take undue advantage of the law which makes them amenable to military courts instead of the civil tribunals of the land. Officers are proverbially jealous of the dignity of their calling, but this natural and proper feeling finds expression at times in unfortunate ways, thanks largely to the fact that an officer's judges are his peers. It is not long since wide-spread indignation was caused throughout South Germany by a painful incident which strikingly illustrated this point. In a *café* at Carlsruhe a lieutenant belonging to the local garrison was seated, and in passing by his chair an artisan happened awkwardly to knock against it. The officer demanded an apology, and as the artisan foolishly declined to give it, he drew his sword and attempted to run the man through the body. Spectators of the scene intervened, and the artisan made his way into another room ; but the officer's blood, instead of cooling, became hotter as he further reflected upon the insult he had received, and, following the man, and finding him alone, and his exit prevented by a locked door, he deliberately stabbed him through the back with fatal results. It must also be added that the officer's conduct received implicit condonation from the Government

when brought to debate a short time later in the Reichstag.

If the officers, for their part, have a grievance more justifiable than service grievances generally are, it is that when the time comes for taking their discharge in the ordinary course, the State does not treat them over-liberally. The complaint is not unheard of elsewhere ; but in Germany, where the embryo officer is not always born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, and where officers' pay has never been accused of exorbitancy by the most rigidly economical critic of army estimates, it has a serious basis of fact. The officer claims that the Government and country in whose service he spends the best years of his life — often without receiving remuneration sufficient to meet the normal professional calls upon a man in his position — should at least guarantee him, on retirement, occupation in some public sphere compatible with his rank and capacities, or, failing that, an adequate pension allowance. At present the former alternative is held out in but a small minority of cases, and as the average pension claimable is inadequate to the maintenance of a tolerable appearance, service in some private capacity is resorted to where possible, though here again it is only the favoured few who succeed in obtaining suitable appointments. Sooner or later the question will have to be seriously faced by the

Imperial Government. It will mean higher army expenditure, but it is inevitable, for the present scale of officers' pay and pensions does not take account of the severe claims and obligations of modern life.

What especially distinguishes the German army from every other modern army is the masterly way in which all the principal functions of organisation and administration are centralised in a body of chosen men, whose one object is to do the army's thinking. This body is the General Staff; for there is no Imperial Ministry of War. After the Emperor, the supreme central authority is the Committee of the Federal Council for the Army and Fortresses, whose president is the Prussian War Minister, while the Prussian Ministry of War acts as its executive organ, and conducts all necessary business with the separate War Ministries of Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Saxony. But the true "brain of the army" is the General Staff. It is composed of the cleverest officers in the entire army, who undergo training of a special character in the Berlin War Academy. The members of the Staff are not, however, permanent, but are constantly being drawn from, and returned to, the troops. The duties of this council are multifarious. It is primarily responsible for the well-being of the service, both in peace and war. It controls military movements, mobilises, organises, and

governs; makes plans of war and fights battles on paper. It not only administers the affairs of the home army, but follows military activities abroad, and knows as much about the defensive position and resources of some nations as they know themselves, and often a good deal more. In a word, the General Staff is the master-mind that directs the countless movements of a vast army, whose millions of members, active and in reserve, are scattered over an area of two hundred and eleven thousand square miles. Other countries have their War Departments, but in no State are the deliberative and administrative departments of the military system so thoroughly organised as in Germany, because in no other State is militarism so scientifically and so seriously studied.

A question very closely affecting the life of the army, yet having interest for wider circles of society, is the continued popularity of the duel. No doubt the practice is on the decline, alike in the army, amongst students, and, more still, in private life, though official statistics on the subject do not give a faithful idea of the extent to which it is even yet resorted to, often on the flimsiest of pretexts. Essentially the duel is, of course, an institution of the army, whose unwritten laws recognise both its permissibility and necessity, and prescribe precisely when and how it shall be resorted to.

There is no doubt that the root of this evil is the arbitrary conduct of the military courts of honour — courts of officers, which, created by royal warrant, are made, by the etiquette of the army, absolutely binding upon those to whom their judgments refer, whether such judgments are sought or not. These courts take it upon themselves to say when challenges issued to officers must be accepted ; and naturally they show no disposition to deviate from the traditions of the mess-room, which regard the duel as the stoutest part of honour's armour. The officer who is bidden to respond to a challenge must do so, whether he like or not, on pain of taboo by all his colleagues, which is tantamount to dismissal from the army.

Not long ago, an officer who had declined a duel, and had, instead, resorted to law, was expelled from the officers' corps to which he belonged ; with the result that he changed his mind and fought a duel, for which, happily for him, his antagonist paid the penalty.

Even so humane a man as the Emperor William I. declared, late in his reign, "I will no more tolerate in my army an officer who is capable of wantonly wounding the honour of a comrade than one who does not know how to vindicate his own honour." The attitude was contradictory, for it is exactly wanton insult — or insult which is regarded as such —

which gives rise to duels, and the officers who are at fault nevertheless remain in the army so long as they are willing to give sanguinary satisfaction, should that be required.

The present Emperor's most explicit and most deliberate utterance on the subject is contained in the preamble to a Cabinet Order, drawn up at the end of the year 1896, for the better regulation of military courts of honour. "It is my will," said the Emperor, "that duels among my officers should be more effectively prevented than hitherto. Their occasion is often of a trifling character, such as private differences and insults where friendly compromise is attainable without prejudice to professional honour. An officer must recognise that it is wrong to injure the honour of another. If, however, he has erred through hastiness or excitement, the chivalrous course to pursue is not to persist in his error, but to be ready to agree to a friendly compromise. It is equally the duty of one who has been offended or insulted to accept the offer of reconciliation, so far as professional honour and propriety permit. It is therefore my will that the Council of Honour shall henceforth, as a matter of principle, co-operate in the settlement of affairs of honour. The Council must undertake this duty with the conscientious endeavour to bring about an amicable settlement."

The Cabinet Order then issued for the army's

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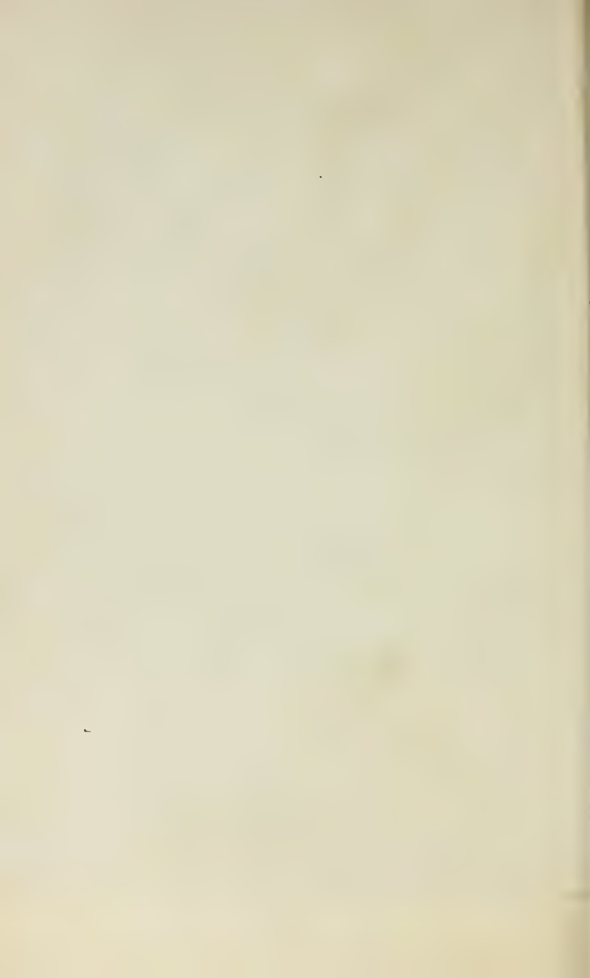

guidance decreed that when a dispute or insult between officers is incapable of pacific settlement "in conformity with the requirements of professional honour" — that is, in accordance with the standard of honour and the reparation due to wounded dignity which military etiquette lays down — the parties concerned must, without resorting to arms, communicate at once with the Council of Honour which applies to them, and this body, after learning the facts of the case, may either (1) postpone a settlement of the difference ; (2) declare that no settlement is possible, and refer the matter to a Court of Honour ; or (3) declare that there is no question of honour at issue, and discharge the case ; but all decisions of a Council of Honour are subject to the veto of certain superior officers. Where either of the parties is dissatisfied with the finding of a Council of Honour, appeal is also allowed through such officers to the Emperor personally, as head of the army. The Councils of Honour have similarly to adjudicate in cases of dispute between officers and private persons. Nominally, and, no doubt, with intention, the Order discourages duelling in the army, though it by no means forbids it ; and, in spite of the heavier obligations imposed upon the judges, there is yet little to prevent choleric officers from crossing swords, if they are seriously disposed. Much, of course, depends upon

the constitution of the Councils of Honour ; they possess, theoretically, the power to prevent a duel wherever they wish to employ it ; but as these bodies are composed of the same susceptible and inflammable material out of which the duellists themselves are made, it is difficult to ensure that entire objectivity of consideration which is desirable, while it is hardly possible to conceive of an affair of honour ever coming for decision before men actually prejudiced against this obsolete and barbarous mode of settling disputes. Unfortunately, too, the whole theory of the permissibility of duelling is based upon the unpromising doctrine that honour amongst officers is something different from honour amongst civilians, and that atonement which would be held to be ample in the latter's case when wrong has been done, should not of necessity satisfy the former.

How different the German officer's views of this question are from those generally prevalent in modern society may be illustrated by an article which was contributed by an officer to the principal service journal of Germany, when the last public outcry against the practice occurred. After proving to his complete satisfaction that Christian doctrine is not opposed to the duel, though granting it to be inconsistent with the law of the land, the writer went on to say : "How we, as officers, have to act is prescribed

for us by orders, instructions, and the unwavering customs and traditions of our class. Those are our laws, those are our authorities. If thereby we come into conflict with the imperial laws, we are ready to take the consequences. Let him who, after sincere self-examination, free from feeling of hatred and anger, determines to fight, do so in the conviction that he thereby transgresses neither the commandments of God nor the ordinances of Courts of Honour nor dominant customs. As on the field of battle, may he enter upon the conflict thrust upon him by circumstances with the firm belief that, 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord.'" Such candid advocacy of the duel and such thoroughgoing conviction of its propriety are, to say the least, novel and refreshing, though they offer little hope that the practice will soon fall into desuetude.

It should be stated, however, that the Bavarian Government, unlike the Prussian, has invariably looked upon duelling with a less lenient eye. Not only do the Bavarian military regulations discourage duelling, and forbid any Court of Honour to exercise coercion upon an officer who may be unwishful to place his life in peril in any such absurd way, but occasions have occurred in which the Bavarian Prince Regent has himself intervened and openly taken the side of officers

who, for conscientious reasons, have refused to respond to a challenge. Not only so, but there is a vast preponderance of public opinion throughout Germany hostile to the duel ; and it is significant that, in a country not given to parliamentary petitioning, no fewer than seven thousand petitions, most of them signed by several thousand persons, were addressed to the Government on the occasion of the last duel scandal, calling for prompt repressive measures. The last time the question provided a full-dress debate in the Reichstag, as it does periodically, the House was pretty equally divided. Against the practice spoke energetically the Clericals, the Radicals, and the Social Democrats ; the first on religious grounds, the last two on the peculiar ground that duelling was a privilege of the "upper classes," since working-men were debarred from resorting to the less dangerous arbitrament of fisticuffs, save on peril of police measures. On the other hand, the two Conservative parties—which give to the army the majority of its officers—approved of the duel as a sort of necessity of civilisation which German society would abandon only with hazard to personal honour and chivalry.

How unequally the duel works in practice may be illustrated by actual occurrences of recent date. At a public dance in the provinces a dispute arose between a young lieutenant and a student. The latter was under the impression

that the officer had forbidden a lady in the room to dance with his brother, and, the evening being far advanced, the two passed from words to blows. The matter was in due course reported by the officer to the Court of Honour of his regiment, and this body decided that the insult he had received could be atoned only by a duel. A challenge was accordingly issued and accepted, the conditions being alternate shots at fifteen yards until the death or disablement of one of the combatants. The president of the military Court of Honour himself acted as umpire. After three shots had been exchanged the student was slightly wounded, but the umpire refused to allow the duel to stop, even though the student had meantime offered an apology to the aggrieved officer. The fight went on, and, with the fifth exchange of shots, the student was mortally wounded. The whole of these facts were published by the military authorities, in order to impress an indignant public with a due sense of the absolute correctness of their behaviour in the matter.

As a relief to this tragic side of the question, the following curious incidents may be related. Three men, one a Reserve officer, were prosecuted for a brutal attack upon a fourth person. During the trial the judge who heard the case chanced to make the comment that the conduct of the accused was "ungentlemanlike." He

was promptly challenged by the military defendant, but declined to accept the challenge, on the ground that his words had been used in the exercise of his judicial functions. As he, too, was a Reserve officer, the matter came before the regimental Court of Honour, which decided that he must fight; and as he still refused, he was expelled from the officers' corps. Not long ago, a Berlin student of law who had been rebuked by the head of the legal faculty for unseemly behaviour at an examination, sent his examiner a challenge. The professor promptly placed the matter in the hands of the police, and the militant young man was sentenced to four months' detention in a fortress.

Duels amongst students are common still — perhaps much more so than the University authorities wot of; and the causes are exactly those which tend to, and are held to justify, duels amongst officers — insults and indignities for which the ordinary apologies of civilised life are not held to atone. These duels are carried out with the utmost secrecy, and the only knowledge of them which reaches the world at large is through cryptic paragraphs which frequently find their way into the newspapers. There are two kinds of duel — the duel with pistols and that with sabres. The pistol duel is fought, as a rule, at fifteen paces. Facing each other, with their long-muzzled pistols pointed backward

over the shoulder, the combatants advance as the umpire counts from one to five, a step for each number. They may fire at the first step, taking but a moment's aim, or both or either may wait until the distance has been lessened. But if one fires he must stand his ground until the other has had his turn, even though he advance the whole five paces. The sabre duel is a murderous affair, for the combatants fight without any of the protection usual in fencing, and time is not called until one of the two has been disabled.

Very different in character, as well as origin, is the rapier fencing (*Mensuren*), in which students so largely engage. In the main it is a harmless exercise of skill and a test of spirit, and the worst side of it is that its devotees waste much time, and allow their faces to be hacked and hewn regardless of appearance. Virtually all the students' associations except the theological require their members to engage in a series of *Mensuren*. A student enters an association as freshman, and promotion to full membership cannot be attained until he has fought his first *Mensur*. The members of some societies are pledged to a fixed number of encounters each term, and here the challenges are amicably arranged and amicably prosecuted. There is no danger in the exercise, though the weapons used frequently inflict severe wounds, which leave

their mark for life. For safety's sake the hands, eyes, neck, and breast are protected — the hands by means of baskets, the eyes by means of iron spectacles, and the other parts by means of silk bandages and shields. The face and skull are thus the parts really exposed to the cuts of the glittering blade. At every *Mensur* a medical student is present, and it is his business to attend to the wounds, and stop the encounter if it promises to become serious. He discharges his duty well, and many are the stories of the surgical feats which are performed in emergencies of this kind — of how nose-ends and ear-tips are gathered expeditiously from the ground and replaced so skilfully as not to betray the temporary excision, nay, of how science has even remedied the defects of nature by making crooked noses straight in the act of restoration.

The *Mensur* is quite in keeping with the military spirit of Germany ; and there is no gainsaying the fact that, in so far as malice and revenge are absent, it has a distinct disciplinary value. Its exercise inculcates fortitude, hardihood, and endurance ; and familiarity with pain is not its least useful result. It would be absurd to contend that manly virtues can be acquired only at the rapier's point, but the *Paukboden*, or fencing-floor, is a tradition of German academic life, and as such it must be judged and tolerated. The present Emperor is one of the

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warmest defenders of the *Mensur*. "I hope," he said, addressing a students' meeting at Bonn some time ago, "that as long as there are German corps students, the spirit which is fostered in their corps, and which is steeled by strength and courage, will be preserved, and that you will always take delight in handling the rapier. There are many people who do not understand what our *Mensuren* really mean, but that must not lead us astray. As in the Middle Ages manly strength and courage were steeled by the practice of jousting or tournaments, so the spirit and habits which are acquired from membership of a corps furnish us with that degree of fortitude which is necessary to us when we go out into the world, and which will last as long as there are German universities."

If this fencing led no farther, no grave objection could be raised against it. It is, however, questionable whether duelling of a serious kind would be practiced by German students did not the *Mensur* claim so much devotion. Familiarity with the rapier predisposes to the use of more dangerous weapons, and students who win renown on the *Paukboden* are not slow to try conclusions upon the green sward of the early morning tryst.

CHAPTER VI

PUBLIC EDUCATION

THE very mention of Germany calls to the mind the vision of endless processions of pedagogues, with spectacle on nose and ferule on side. Germany is a land of schools, just as it is a land of soldiers, and, in truth, the association between the school and the army, or, more correctly, the army's efficiency, is closer than might at first be supposed. Prussia — to speak of the soul of the Empire — has had compulsory military service for something under a hundred years, but it has had compulsory education for more than half a century longer, and to-day the principle is universal in every one of the other States, though schools are not everywhere free, even in the same State. But the early introduction of compulsory and (very largely) of free education is not sufficient of itself to account for the exemplary schools which Germany possesses. The true secret of their excellence lies in the fact that the State insists on controlling

the entire system of education, from the bottom to the top. Elementary schools, continuation schools, higher schools, technical schools, boys' schools, girls' schools, municipal schools, private schools, universities,—all are subject to State approval and State regulation, and in everything the Minister of Education and Public Worship reserves the right of last word ; nor is he slow to say it if necessary. It is commonly believed that German schools "drive" their children ; and the discipline which they undergo is certainly exacting. Those who enter the elementary school do so on the completion of their sixth year, and they cannot leave it until the age of fourteen. Let the child be never so bright, he is not on that account deprived of his full course of education. But there is this difference between the German and the English system : the former does not tolerate the pitiable "half-time" system. The school years are undividedly devoted to school work, and the factory and the farm are bidden to wait their time. Even fourteen is held by many German school reformers to be too young an age for optional withdrawal from school. The curriculum of the elementary schools naturally differs according to States, and also according as the schools are in town or country. In the Berlin schools the subjects taught comprise, besides the three R's, grammar, geography, history, religion, natural

history, drawing, geometry, singing, drill and gymnastics, and sewing. In some schools, natural sciences, chemistry, and stenography are also taught. Religious instruction is confined to the Bible, the Catechism, and the learning of the Church hymns in Protestant schools, and to this branch of school work great importance is attached by the State, which in this matter has plenty of zealous supporters, both in the ranks of the Conservative and the Catholic party.

Here it must be noted that the schools are, as far as possible, made "confessional"; that is, they take the character, so far as religious instruction is concerned, of the Church which is most represented by the scholars, whether Protestant or Catholic. For the Jews, too, special schools are provided in the towns, but mixed or "simultaneous" schools also exist. Nevertheless, the religious difficulty obtains, though it is essentially a modern phase of the education question in Germany. Half a century ago it was never heard of. How far the national sentiment of Prussia was at that time from the indifference and antagonism to religious teaching which are so marked in these sceptical days may be judged by the provisions which the constitution of 1850 introduced on the question of religion, religious teaching, and religious convictions. These provided for the co-ordination of elementary schools, as far as possible,

according to "confessional conditions," as in other States, and it was provided that religious instruction in these schools should be conducted by "the religious communities affected." This instruction was to be accepted as a matter of course, and there was no idea either of secular schools or of relieving parents of the usual obligation to bring up their children in "reverence and godly fear," according to true Scriptural rule.

The religious difficulty is mainly a consequence of the widespread rationalism and materialism which are to be found amongst those who are alienated from the Church. In Prussia the difficulty is dealt with in a somewhat rough-and-ready fashion. According to the Prussian Common Law (*Landrecht*), religious teaching must of necessity form part of the school curriculum, and only one definite religion can be taught in each school, while, as far as may be, only children belonging to the religion taught are admitted. Thus, while there are separate schools for State Church Protestants, for Roman Catholics, and for Jews, the Free Churches — like the atheistic seceders — are not recognised at all. Conscientious scruples are, however, partially protected by a provision in the old Common Law which states that "children who are to be brought up in a different religion from that of the elementary school they attend cannot be

compelled to receive the religious instruction in the same." Originally this provision was introduced in the interest solely of State Church Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, and was applied in places where either one or two of these sections of the community had no other option than to use an alien school. In time, however, two other classes of people came to benefit by the exemption,—the new Protestant sects which appeared in various parts of Germany, and the free-thinkers who had formally withdrawn from the National Church, as the law of the land allows them to do. Under successive Ministers of Education — the last of them Ministers Falk and von Gossler — the children of "dissident" parents were exempted from religious teaching, without restriction, on a simple declaration that such parents would take other measures to provide for their religious instruction. Minister von Zedlitz, however, in 1892 introduced a new reservation, when he made exemption from religious teaching dependent upon proof that the substitutionary teaching provided elsewhere by the parents was adequate in character. Dr. Bosse, his successor, maintained the same position ; and when taxed with infringing the principle of freedom of conscience, as laid down by the Constitution, advanced the ingenious contention that the consciences of parents could not be offended owing to their

children being compelled to receive religious instruction, for such instruction was a matter between the school and the child alone, and the law did not recognise freedom of conscience on the part of schoolboys and schoolgirls,— if it did, they might as well close all the schools at once. This, then, is how the practice of the schools rests at present. Children may be withdrawn during the religious teaching hour, but only on their parents positively undertaking to provide such teaching elsewhere ; nor is it possible for protesting parents to obtain other redress.

But, again, the excellence of the Government elementary schools is also due to the systematic training given to the teachers. Not only are the preparatory colleges beyond praise, but the college course is long and severe. The pupil-teacher, pitiable product of the English school-starving system, is unknown. Teaching of even an elementary character is deferred until the theoretical part of training is over,— the eight or ten years' continuous study, first in a higher school, be it observed, and then in a training college. The result is that qualified teachers enter upon the serious work of life and become independent far later than with us, but popular education gains incalculably by the longer and severer discipline through which they are required to pass. The general type

of teacher, socially, is distinctly a superior one. There is, indeed, little difference between the teachers of the better elementary and those of the higher schools, so far as rank of life goes. The fact is, that no small part of the students who fail to pass the very severe examination which is necessary before a higher-school teacher's diploma can be obtained fall back upon the elementary school, for which a much easier test is imposed. Yet the remuneration is, on the whole, very inadequate, as English ideas are. A salary of £100 is regarded as relatively liberal, and one of £150 as beyond the dreams of avarice. There is, however, a certain compensation in the fact that moderate pensions are also offered after a long term of service. Yet, meanwhile, the teacher has to live, and he feels the pinch severely. But here a feature of the German system which is in every respect laudable must be noted. The salaries of teachers are fixed, and rise with the years of service, instead of depending on the results of examinations, or on scholars' attendances. The principle of bribery which was introduced into the English system by a mercenary and business spirit—partly with a view of running education on commercial principles, and partly that children might be hurried through the school to the factory as soon as possible—is unknown in Germany. Thus, though there may be over-pressure, there

is no cramming. The children pursue a course of instruction which is normal throughout, and their training is honest, thorough, and rational.

The care of the children does not stop, however, at their mental development. Gymnastic exercises on scientific principles form a serious part of the school plan, both for the younger and older children. Scholars' excursions, in amplification of the ordinary lessons in natural science, are a very attractive feature of the summer work. School baths are becoming more and more common. For the children of poor parents free meals are supplied in many places during the winter months. The school doctor is also a responsible official in the larger towns. He is engaged to exercise a general oversight over the health of the scholars, and to give advice to the authorities upon hygienic and medical questions when required. The municipality of Berlin employs the partial services of a large number of experienced doctors in this way. In every direction enterprise, thoroughness, and practical common-sense characterise the German elementary school system. The expenditure has become far greater, the machinery vastly more complicated, than could have seemed possible a decade or two ago ; but that is because Germany, having hitherto led the way in popular education, has determined not

to fall behind, and has faith in the result of its investment and its endeavours.

In the co-ordination of public schools, as it has been developed in Prussia, no fewer than seven types of secondary schools intervene between the elementary schools and the universities. First come the *Gymnasia,* which are strictly classical schools. The *Gymnasium* is the first door to the highest possibilities of State service and professional promotion ; for a student who has passed the final examination in the first form (*Prima*) may claim entrance to the universities and to State technical academies of every kind, or he may at once undergo the specific examination requisite to becoming a civil servant. The *Progymnasia* are like the *Gymnasia,* save that they lack the first or highest form. The *Realgymnasia* retain Latin, but drop Greek, and in place of it give more time to some modern subjects. The lowest class of *Gymnasia* are the *Realprogymnasia,* which take the same subjects as the last, but do not carry their pupils so far. The *Oberrealschulen* and the *Realschulen,* as a rule, dispense both with Greek and Latin, and, as is meet in schools intended for boys who will follow a commercial life, give great attention to living languages and to so-called practical subjects. At the bottom of the list come the Higher Burgher Schools, whose teaching is even more mercantile in character. But each of these

different schools offers to the youth who passes its final examination some special opening in the service of the State. The prospect before the lad whose education has been obtained in the Burgher School is, of course, very limited, and if he secures some junior clerkship in the Law Courts or the Post Office, he will be content ; but as the status of the school rises, so the social and professional prospect of its pupils widens. For every State servant is what he is by educational qualification. Everything is ordered with scientific exactness, and a sensible father, before determining to which school his son shall go, considers, besides the depth of his purse, the ultimate career in prospect.

Not only in Prussia, but in other German States, the discovery has been made that the *Gymnasia* have been excessively fostered, to the detriment of the non-classical schools, and a strong reaction has set in favourable to the greater encouragement of higher schools with a modern side. Against the *Gymnasia*, as such, there is little or nothing to be said. As classical schools they are irreproachable, and the students they send out are, in their way, intellectual prodigies. But in so far as the giving of undue prominence to classical subjects makes education one-sided and unpractical, the *Gymnasia* have much to answer for and much to make good. "The elect minority of students who pass

through all the stages until the last gauntlet of examination has been run, win for themselves clear title to respect, for the discipline is no child's play, but the sacrifice is often a heavy one. They have toiled laboriously up the heights ; yet, instead of the world lying at their feet, as might be supposed, the prospect before them is often very limited. If they wait long enough, the career they have had in view may come within their reach, but the waiting is generally tedious and trying. Should they, however, abandon their original design, and look for other openings, the choice is small indeed. For the worst of this system of education is, that the youths who, after a long and terribly hard school course, are unable to gain admission to any of the professions, cannot easily turn to anything else. They are only fit for the narrow sphere upon which their hopes and aims were set. They lack adaptability, because their education has been one-sided, and has paid little or no regard to the requirements and conditions of practical life. Worse, however, is the case of those who, after spending many years in studies far above their capacities, are sent into the world half educated. The number of these is very large. Since every man of much money and little discretion wishes his sons, whether promising or not, to go through the *Gymnasium,* the lower forms of the classical schools are always

crowded. Naturally, the progress of the youths is not equal. Those of ability advance normally from form to form, while those without aptitude for learning remain behind, and drudge for years at the rudiments of an erudite knowledge which Divine Providence never intended for heads like theirs. It is an absurd arrangement, but the fault lies at the doors of foolish parents. So the years pass on, and by the time the backward youths should have reached the highest form they are only half-way to the top, and at this stage they are turned out,—educational failures. The ten years or more which should have covered the whole curriculum of the *Gymnasium* have been expended in struggling through the elementary stages. Useful subjects have been neglected altogether in favour of studies far above the learner's capacity. The boy has gone through endless labour, and the result is of the least tangible character. If, on the other hand, these precious years had been spent in a school of a lower grade, little or none of the time need have been thrown away. The lad would not have been turned out a pundit, but he would not have remained an ignoramus. As he went to the *Gymnasium* he had to submit to its inexorable discipline. It did the best it could with the material at disposal. That better results were not achieved was not, in his case at any rate, the fault of the education there imparted,

but of the learner, who was not fitted to attempt its acquisition." The *Gymnasia* will never be dethroned, however, though the tendency is to reduce their number, and proportionately to increase the supply of modern schools, which, in the words of the present Emperor, shall turn out no longer, "Greeks and Romans, but Germans," hence reducing the present "over-production of learned and so-called educated people, the number of whom is now greater than the nation can bear." All Germany jubilantly welcomed the Emperor's insistence on reform in this direction, when he took up the thorny subject a few years ago ; but, though a beginning has been made, much remains to be done.

As for the cost of this higher education, it is ridiculously low. Figures obtained from five hundred *Gymnasia* and *Progymnasia* showed the maximum yearly rates to be under £3 10*s*. in a hundred and twenty-five schools, £3 10*s*. to £5 in two hundred and one schools, £5 to £5 15*s*. in a hundred and twenty-five, and over £5 15*s*. in only fifty-four cases. Again, of two hundred and seventeen *Realgymnasia*, *Realprogymnasia,* and *Oberrealschulen*, twenty charged less than £3 10*s*., and a hundred and twelve £5 and over. Of a hundred and seventy-seven *Realschulen* and Higher Burgher schools, eighty-seven charged £3 10*s*. and thirty-five £5 and upwards. In Bavaria the lowest rates were found

to exist, as, for example, in very exceptional cases, 9*s*., 10*s*., and 12*s*. a year; while in Saxony, which had, on the whole, the highest figures, as much as £10 10*s*., £13 16*s*., and £15 was charged. The rates in Prussia averaged about £4 15*s*. While education of the highest class is obtainable on terms so moderate, the pupils benefit at the expense of the teachers, who are deserving of far better payment than they, as a rule, receive. In the smaller provincial towns, headmasters (called rectors) of higher boys' and girls' schools can readily be had for any sum between £100 and £200, and assistants for special departments for from £60 to £100.

From the secondary school to the university is a step far more natural, and far more frequently taken, than in England. Perhaps in no country in the world is the door of educational advancement so wide open as in Germany, where a boy of genuine intelligence and capacity, no matter how humble his origin, or how straitened his resources, may make the triumphant progress from the elementary school to the university without fear of obstacle, or — given staying power—of failure. One of the most famous academic teachers of to-day in Germany, a thinker of world-wide reputation, travelled this selfsame way, and is a proof of the distinction which is within the reach of a plodding country

schoolboy who betimes goes not unwillingly to school, and in fuller years has a love of learning for learning's sake, together with the ambition to put his gifts to practical use.

How seriously the Germans take education, how devoted they are to its acquisition, may be judged from the fact that no fewer than seventy-five per cent. of all the pupils who during a period of twelve years left the *Gymnasia* and *Realgymnasia* of Prussia, having taken the final certificate of "maturity," proceeded at once to the universities. Of these, thanks to its multiplicity of States and Courts, Germany is the fortunate possessor of no fewer than twenty-two of all grades. In every university there are three classes of teachers. There are first the Ordinary Professors, with whom are ranked Honorary Ordinary Professors, where such exist; next come the Extraordinary Professors, sometimes few in number, though often as numerous as the ordinary teachers; and then quite an army of *Privatdocenten*, who do not bear the title of professor. The latter are teachers on probation, generally young doctors who, after going through the university course with distinction, decide to follow an academic career. Almost invariably they are men of power and promise, and the only pity is that the universities compensate them so meagrely while using them so freely. But few even of the professors

can be said to be spoiled in this respect. High thinking has still to go hand-in-hand with low living, and the flesh to be flagellated for the spirit's and the taxpayer's sake,—for the main burden of academic salaries falls on the State treasury.

The students are best off, for the fees charged are, as a rule, almost nominal. For several pounds a term the student may hear as many lectures as he is able to work up, and in the event of poverty he can always obtain partial or complete remission of fees. A legend of Rostock University is that, owing to the number of its scholarships, an official is deputed to meet all trains at the beginning of term for the purpose of forcing "free places" (*Freistellen*) on the incoming students. Nor are poor students rare. If any testimony were needed on the point it would be afforded by the many offers of pedagogic service which are to be found affixed to every university blackboard. Money must be more precious than time when lessons are offered at sixpence the hour, and daily tutors can be employed for "£2 a month and supper free." But even more impressive tokens of the low value placed upon educational service might be quoted from this fertile source of information and entertainment. Here is a literal copy of a blackboard announcement, jotted down in a note-book during my Berlin days: "A classical

philologist is desired as private tutor for one pupil. The principal requirements are, that he shall have passed his State examinations [that is, taken his doctor's degree], and served his probationary year as teacher and that he shall be expert in stenography. In return for his services free board and lodging are offered." Simply that, and nothing more! To this announcement a student's hand had added: "Is that all? Will he not be required to know music, English, French, ventriloquism, and croquet?" It is a sin unto death to disfigure a blackboard notice, yet even the Rector Magnificus himself would have pardoned this offending annotator.

The frequenters of a German university are decidedly diverse in composition, and represent —as is proper—a fuller and fairer admixture of the staple elements of society than can be found associated with any other national institution. A careful classification of the students who matriculated at the universities of Prussia during four successive terms showed the total of 12,709 native students to be made up of 2198 sons of tradesmen (merchants, shopkeepers, etc.), 1981 sons of manufacturers and artisans, 1849 sons of officials without academic education, 1613 sons of independent farmers, 1099 sons of teachers without academic education, 890 sons of clergymen, 888 sons of State and municipal officials and solicitors with academic education, 471 sons

of doctors, 416 sons of teachers with academic education, 351 sons of retired persons living on their means, 253 sons of large landowners, 216 sons of hotel keepers, 183 sons of apothecaries, and 127 sons of officers of the army. Yet this mingling in the lecture-rooms of classes so dissimilar does not really imply any intimate association on equal terms, or even the tacit forgetfulness of social disparities, of which all alike are conscious. These disparities are not emphasised, do not even receive open recognition; but there is none the less an absence of that personal tie between the students which exists so largely in the English residential colleges. The German universities are not, however, residential, but are essentially teaching institutions, to which the student goes, or should go, so many (or so few) times a day, to hear lectures, and thereafter to follow his own sweet will and way in the world. Hence the bond of student comradeship is slight indeed, unless cultivated by extra-university methods, and especially by those of the students' corps, with their accompanying jollities and *bon-camaraderie.*

But the disadvantage of this looseness of the tie which connects the student with his university is chiefly seen in the absence of effective control over study, and this is a serious matter where idle students — for there are plenty such — are concerned. Whether a student seriously works

or not is known to no one but himself and eventually the examiners, who, when his semesters are over, are called upon to judge his fitness for the doctor's title. His real teachers — the professors whose lectures he more or less regularly attends—know as a rule but little of his progress, and often care less. Their duty in the matter is very perfunctory. It is to initial the student's lecture-register at the beginning and at the end of term,—at the beginning of term in testimony to the fact that a specific lecture has been taken (*belegt*) and paid for, and at the end of term in testimony that it has been attended. But how does the professor know this? He does not know it at all, and never, or seldom, tries to learn the truth or otherwise of the certificate he gives. And yet, when, after lecturing to an average room of a score and a half students all through term, a professor finds himself invited to sign a hundred books, it should occur to his mind either that the function which he is discharging is an utterly meaningless one, or that he is taking part in a pious fraud. Not all professors are indifferent upon this subject, however; and though custom is difficult to break, and traditions die hard, it is scarcely too much to expect that before long one of two things will happen,—either steps will be taken to exercise a certain oversight over the work of the students who duly matriculate, and to see that the lectures

which they take are really attended, or the teachers will be relieved of participation in a formality which, while it serves no useful purpose, effectively protects idle students from detection.

While, however, familiar intercourse between the teachers and their hearers has largely passed out of fashion, the personal relationship is in some degree cultivated by means of the seminary. This is an inner circle of students, formed for specialised study, consultation, debate, and independent investigation, under the guidance of the professor in connexion with whose lectures it is conducted. The seminary meets, as a rule, during hours not taken up by ordinary lectures, and is a powerful stimulus to earnest study, and a pleasant means of bringing professor and student into nearer acquaintance. At every meeting a paper is read and then criticised indiscriminately, after which the presiding professor sums up, and passes judgment upon the opinions which have been uttered. Then the German professor, whom conventional ideas picture as the incarnation of aridity, is seen from his most attractive side, and he proves a thoroughly human creature indeed, as different from the common caricature as a black-and-white drawing from the warm colours of nature.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THOUGHT

IN nothing does it behoove the critic of German life to exercise more circumspection than in his generalisations on the subject of religion. Mention has been made of the variety of race to be found within the pale of the Empire, and this racial variety implies also confessional variety. Of the entire population of the country the Protestants number nearly two-thirds, ; rather over one-third are Roman Catholics ; and about one and a quarter per cent. (or well over half a million) are Jews. One religious division of the population, which occupies so conspicuous a place in Anglo-Saxon countries, is entirely insignificant in Germany,— that of the Protestant Nonconformists. These exist, but in feeble numbers, and their churches are recruited almost exclusively from the working classes. It is noticeable that in some States Protestantism and Catholicism are strikingly localised. In Prussia, for example, the strongholds of the former are

Brandenburg, Pomerania, East Prussia, Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, Hesse-Nassau, and the province of Saxony, while Catholicism has the upper hand in the Rhine Province, Posen, Westphalia, and the Upper Silesia. In Bavaria the Catholics number nearly three-quarters of the entire population, and, in the South, Protestants are few and far between. Saxony, on the other hand, is almost solidly Protestant, though the royal family is Catholic. Other States in which Protestantism is in the ascendant are Oldenburg, Wurtemberg, and Hesse, while Catholicism is the religion of the majority in Baden and Alsace-Lorraine. The Jews are most numerous — relatively to population — in the cities of Berlin and Hamburg, where they form five per cent. of the whole, and least numerous in Saxony, where they are only one in four hundred.

The domain of religion is one which the constitution of the Empire leaves severely alone, for beyond guaranteeing to all citizens freedom of conscience in religious beliefs — a guarantee which is only partially discharged — it allows the various States to manage their ecclesiastical concerns as they like. Each State has its own Established Church, either Protestant or Catholic, and in some States several mutually antagonistic Churches are endowed. In Prussia the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Old Catholic Churches are subsidised, and in other States the Jewish

Church is supported as well. It is an odd arrangement, which leads to odd contradictions. Thus, in Baden, State patronage and help are given to one Church which upholds the doctrines of the Reformation and one which opposes them ; to Catholics who accept the dogma of papal infallibility and Catholics who repudiate it ; and, as a crowning proof of impartiality, to a religious system which rejects altogether the Christian basis common to the other three endowed Churches. It is needful to remember, however, that even the Protestant State Church is not a homogeneous body. It, too, is divided into the Reformed and Lutheran sections, though, of course, the members of both accept the common description, "Evangelical." The division, which is less acutely emphasised now than formerly, is a matter of sacramental interpretation. The Lutherans accept the doctrine of the Real Presence known as consubstantiation, while the Reformed Church, following the Swiss reformer Zwingli, attach to the Eucharist a purely symbolical meaning ; and in Prussia this is the Church of the vast majority of Protestants. It is noteworthy that the only Churches in Germany which are episcopal are the Catholic and Free Methodist, the latter a small body of quite modern introduction.

Not only are Churches liberally endowed by the State, but the State takes religion under its

wing to an extent which an Englishman will find it difficult to credit. In Protestant States the sovereign is *summus episcopus*, and in theory presides over the Supreme Consistory, whose appointment rests with him, or, by royal delegation, with the Minister of Public Worship. Even over the Catholic Church a large degree of control is exercised in return for State endowment. Thus, in Prussia, save in the Rhenish provinces, royal confirmation is necessary to the investiture of both archbishops and bishops. Before the ratification of his election a prelate must take a special and solemn oath of allegiance to the King, declaring that he will be "submissive, faithful, and obedient to his Royal Majesty of Prussia (and his lawful successors in the government) as my most gracious King and Sovereign, promote his welfare according to my ability, prevent injury and detriment to him, and particularly endeavour carefully to cultivate in the minds of the clergy and people under my episcopal care a sense of reverence and fidelity towards the King, love for the Fatherland, obedience to the laws, and all those virtues which in a Christian denote a good citizen, and I will not suffer any clergy subject to me to teach or act in a contrary spirit. In particular, I vow that I will not support any society or association, either at home or abroad, which might endanger the public security, and will inform his Majesty

of any proposals made either in my diocese or elsewhere, that might prove injurious to the State," etc.

The foregoing form of the Catholic episcopal oath of fidelity to the Crown was adopted in 1887, on the conclusion of the famous struggle between the State and the Romish Church in Prussia, known as the *Kulturkampf,* one incident of which was the enactment of the civil marriage. The echoes of the storm caused by this measure—which was introduced in Prussia in 1874, and in the Empire in 1875—have not even yet quite died away. The Government of the day found itself on that occasion in strange company, for its only cordial allies were the democratic and free-thinking parties. The Ultramontanes fought against the law with all the bitterness of men jealous for ecclesiastical prerogatives, but the Conservatives also cordially disliked, and to a large extent openly opposed, the innovation, as being the beginning of a dangerous course of secularisation whose end no one dare predict. "The necessary consequence of a religionless civil marriage," wrote a leading organ of the Church-Conservative party at the time, "will be a religionless school, for we cannot imagine how anyone can hope to preserve a Christian school when the way is being so carefully prepared for modern heathenism by the institution of the civil marriage.

Moreover, with that modern heathenism the monarchy and the divinely ordained sovereignty will certainly be incompatible. Indeed, let the Christian marriage go, and we know not what will remain in the future." Events have entirely falsified this and similar doleful predictions. Though the institution of the civil marriage is still regarded with disfavour by large sections of Protestants, as well as by the entire Catholic population, it would not be right to attribute to it any diminution of Church influence amongst the people. The State has done nothing to discourage ecclesiastical marriage as a voluntary, yet decorous and desirable ordinance, supplementary to the ceremony prescribed by the law, and the Church has not spared any effort to discountenance on the part of its adherents satisfaction with the civil rite. In Westphalia, to take one of the most favourable illustrations, over ninety-eight per cent. of the marriages between Protestants are ratified by the rites of the Church, and though in Berlin only two-thirds of the marriages receive the Church's benediction, the reason is the widespread infidelity amongst the working classes, who formerly ridiculed the religious office to which the law compelled them to submit, where, indeed, they did not prefer irregular marriage to the recognition of the Church's claim to interfere in their domestic arrangements.

In Prussia the clergy receive State patronage in the most practical of ways, for a considerable part of their emoluments comes from the public treasury. To the income which accrues to a benefice locally by endowments and otherwise, is added what is called a "dotation" from the State, rising from £80. Quite recently some important alterations came into force in connexion with these dotations. Marked inequalities in income were diminished, and minimum stipends were fixed, while the ecclesiastical parishes were made the administrators of all endowments, and at the same time were made responsible for the due payment to incumbents of the incomes allotted to their benefices. One effect of this change is to divorce the clergyman from the glebe, which hitherto he has often cultivated on his own account, and the change, though it may take many a round stick from a square hole, is by no means regarded as an unqualified advantage. Prince Bismarck used to say that had he the power he would let the payment of every Minister of State take the form of a moderate estate. This he would enjoin him to cultivate to the best advantage, with a summary "There, make the most you can of it, for it is all you will get." In that way, he argued, the Minister of State—and perhaps it was the head of the Treasury he had most in mind—would think more sympathetically of his brother cult-

THE CIVIL MARRIAGE IN THE COUNTRY

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ivators of the soil, and of taxpayers in general, for a community of interest and aim, of fortune and misfortune, would exist such as is hardly possible when Ministers are paid down in golden coins,—so many of them a year, whether agriculture and industry flourish or decay. Unquestionably much of the sympathy which has knitted the rural pastor and his flock together has been due to the fact that both have lived in vital touch with Nature, wooing her, studying her moods and caprices, wresting from her health and wealth, so that, though different in many respects, their daily interests were largely identical. That the relationship between the two will be improved by a change which will cut pastors from the old glebe-land may reasonably be doubted.

It cannot be said that the Church attracts to any degree the best elements of society. The clergy are in general very well educated, as is inevitable, since the candidates for pastoral office must pass through the university, like all other State officials of the higher grades. But the Church is not in Germany an aristocratic calling. The professions which the higher classes of society particularly feed are the army, the superior branches of the State administrative service, and the law ; and the Church is regarded as beneath notice. An examination of the matriculations at the universities of Prussia during four successive

terms shows that 33 per cent. of the Protestant theological students were the sons of minor officials and teachers, 20 per cent. were the sons of clergymen, 14 per cent. sons of peasants, 13 per cent. sons of manufacturers and artisans, and only 6 per cent. sons of higher State and municipal officials. On the other hand, of the Catholic students of theology 29 per cent. were the sons of peasants, 29 per cent. sons of officials and teachers of the lower grades, and 22.6 per cent. sons of artisans and manufacturers.

So far is Prussia from adopting the theories of religious equality, which are mere commonplaces in most countries, that not only are Church rates for the maintenance of public worship levied indiscriminately on entire communities, but churches are still built out of municipal funds. By an old decree (dated 1573) of the Elector John George, forgotten until it was resuscitated by a needy Church Council, it is provided that where the funds needed for the building and repair of churches in the province of Brandenburg cannot be covered by the existing ecclesiastical endowments of the parish concerned, the municipality or commune (in town and village respectively) may be required to provide them. Not long ago a Berlin church needed enlargement, and, relying upon this decree, the congregation called on the Municipal Council to make a contribution of £5500 towards the cost. That body, which is

permanently Radical, and has always been distinguished by a peculiar antipathy against churches, declined ; but the question coming before the highest court in the land, decision was given in favour of the claim, and a payment was made, much to the disgust of the mayor and corporation. Had this sixteenth-century decree failed, the church could have fallen back upon one of later date, for there is still in legal force a Royal Order of King Frederick I. (1702) which commands that : "Should churches or churchyards need to be built or repaired, every inhabitant and subject of every place, whatever his religion, shall help with all industry, and shall readily pay the proportion that may be required of him." Prussia received the gift of a constitution half a century ago ; but while bestowing upon the nation many new civic rights, it did not relieve it of old obligations, and that of church building is one of the most galling to the modern free-thinker. In spite of Electoral Decrees and Royal Orders, however, it is questionable whether the notorious dearth of churches from which Berlin so long suffered would have been removed but for the pious disposition of the present Emperor. During his short reign more churches have been built in the capital than during all the preceding ninety years of the century, and every one was sorely needed. Not only so, but the Church-Extension movement is

progressing every year towards the ideal of the ecclesiastical authorities,— the provision of a Protestant State Church for every twenty-five thousand of the inhabitants. The fact that these churches have to a large extent been built by private subscription may be taken as a proof that, in Berlin at least, the old spirit of dependence upon the State is in this domain giving way to self-help and self-reliance.

The State patronage of religion means otherwise a good deal more in Germany than in England. It is the theory of the law that every Protestant is a member of the State Church, unless he have formally seceded, which is a legal proceeding ; and the ecclesiastical authorities do not lose sight of this fact. It happens in the provinces that parishioners who systematically neglect public worship, or are found associating themselves with schismatical or heterodox movements, are warned by the heads of the Church, and in the event of continued contumacy are struck off the list of members, and so are deprived of the right of voting in the ecclesiastical affairs of the parish. The yearly secessions from the Church make nowadays a respectable total, but it is noticeable that a great change has taken place in the character of the "Dissent" which prevails in Germany. Half a century ago the "Dissident" who withdrew from the National Church did so from superfluity instead

of paucity of religious scruples ; it was his conscientious objection to State establishments, or such establishments on the existing basis, which caused him to go out into the wilderness. In modern times the Dissident is generally a freethinker of a particularly outspoken and arrogant kind, who publicly emphasises his rejection of the Christian religion by announcing his withdrawal from the Church. The law is, however, very jealous of any indignity offered either to the Church or to religion in public speech or writing, and it is an indictable offence to attack or to agitate against either in an offensive way. And yet, in spite of the powerful State support which it is able to command and is ever ready enough to employ, it would be idle to pretend that the influence of the Protestant Church is as great as might fairly be expected. In the rural districts its position is uniformly strong, but in the towns it is far from proportionate to its opportunities. The working classes largely distrust it, from a belief that it has allowed itself to become the handmaid of a political system, and the middle classes have fallen to a great extent under the spirit of indifferentism which sprang up when the Church lost in strength and vigour, and failed, owing to lack of expansiveness, to respond to the new demands made upon it by the modern growth of urban populations, and thus ground has been lost which it will be difficult to regain.

It is none the less remarkable how strong the hold which the festivals of the Church year still maintain upon all classes alike. In no other country do these festivals more partake of the character of national observances ; and many a man who professes to have shaken himself loose from ecclesiastical associations unconsciously pays homage to the Church and the religion he disdains by the heartiness with which he keeps up some, at least, of the commemorations of the Church's calendar. Christmas is emphatically the national festival of the year, and with it no other can be named in the same breath. The holiday lasts three days, and it is a holiday indeed. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, work of every kind is suspended by universal consent, and Germany becomes young again, as it throws itself, with an enthusiasm which English people would hardly understand, into the enjoyment of the gracious amenities of the season. The festival begins on Christmas Eve, or Holy Eve (*Heiliger Abend*), as it is prettily called, and the fall of dusk is a sign for the emptying of the streets, the end of the day's work and traffic, and the gathering of every family round its own Christmas-tree. *Heilig' Abend* would have no meaning for Germans, either old or young, without the presence in the home of this simple symbol. The tree is adorned with glittering tinsel and numberless tapers, and

round the table on which it stands are arranged the presents which are so liberally exchanged by the members of the family at this time.

The Christmas-tree has gone out of fashion in some countries, but in Germany it occupies a place in the domestic affections which no lapse of years and no aggression of the modern spirit seem to threaten. National customs have been changed and modified in a hundred directions, but the green *Tannenbaum* defies all innovation, and is found in the old place of honour in every German household when Christmas Eve comes round. And not only there : for the spirit of good-will which the season evokes shows itself in no more timely or more welcome way than by supplying the treasured fir tree to hospital, barracks, workhouse, gaol, and wherever else Christmas Eve would be a melancholy mockery but for such thoughtful charity. Pass into the cemeteries and churchyards, too, and you will even see miniature Christmas-trees rising out of the snow on every side, in token that the dead are not forgotten in this time of universal happiness. To me, this strange and profound devotion to the Christmas-tree has always seemed one of the gentlest, as well as the most reverent, traits of the German character.

Passion Week, called in Germany Still Week (*Stille Woche*), or, more usually, Lamentation Week (*Charwoche*), is the principal churchgoing

season of the year, and Good Friday brings more communicants to the altar than any other day. Another solemn festival to which great public importance is attached is the Commemoration of the Dead, or *Todtenfest,* which falls on the last Sunday in the Church year, and corresponds to the Feast of All Saints in the Catholic calendar. Upon this day and upon Good Friday, alone in the whole year, the law requires the suspension of all public amusements. The churches hold services from morning until evening, so vast are the numbers who throng to devotions ; and as black is the universal colour —of altar and pulpit, which are hung in crape, as well as of personal attire—the picture presented is decidedly depressing. The public graveyards are similarly crowded by pious visitors, for it is a day of common mourning, and for their consolation the clergy usually give addresses in the open air at frequent intervals. Prayer and Penance Day, which falls variously, is still a serious institution in several of the German States, though it is no longer universal. The institution goes back to the time when Germany suffered from the horrors of war, pest, famine, and other ills which civilisation and sanitation together have succeeded, in recent times, in keeping more or less within check. In Saxony, for example, it dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the Elector

A WESTPHALIAN FUNERAL

F. Hiddemann

John George the First issued a decree ordering the observance of three hours of prayer and penance every week,—an infliction which the impious Saxons succeeded in time in reducing to one complete day in twelve months. In Prussia, national penance has only been done since 1813, when Frederick William III. was still uncertain as to the issue of his desperate struggle to escape from the clutches of Napoleon.

Residence abroad is a good corrective of religious narrowness ; and if English people travelled more, and observed more during their travels, instead of keeping together as though in mortal dread of the unknown foreigner, the fiction would soon cease to be popular that true religion and undefiled is only to be found in one very circumscribed part of Europe. It does not take long to convince the peripatetic student of men and manners that, in spite of the different ecclesiastical names and doctrines which people take to themselves, Western mankind is pretty much the same in all the essential elements of character. Religion may be professed with greater or less insistence, and religious rites be observed with varying regularity and devotion ; yet look only below the surface of things, and the same human excellencies and shortcomings, the same graces and blemishes, the same supreme virtues and sordid vices, are found everywhere, though naturally not in the same

proportions. It may be conceded that the religious spirit is not shown in Germany in all the ways to which an Englishman may be accustomed, yet it would be the sorriest cant to speak of Germany as irreligious on that account. Lessing said he "always found the best Christians among the people who knew least about theology"; and those who most intimately know the nation of whom Lessing wrote will understand best what he meant. The stay-at-home Englishman is apt to confuse religion with churchgoing, and, setting up that convenient test, he concludes that he has reason both to be satisfied with himself and to justify a censorious criticism of other nations. But the test is entirely arbitrary and fallacious. The scrupulously regular churchgoer is not less common in Germany than in England; but, on the other hand, you will meet an abundance of the most excellent people, of pure and faultless life, even of deeply religious character, who very rarely go to church, and who would rather be sentenced to prison than to live through a Sunday as the Englishman knows and loves it. The explanation is, that what I may call the method of religion is, not the same in the two countries, and the most striking difference consists in the greater subjectivity of religion in England. In Germany, religion is a matter more of the intellect than the heart; hence it is less regarded as

a personal matter, and the religious instinct is far less egoistic. The Englishman professes religion more, yet without being more really religious. Above all, he treats religion with a freedom and a familiarity which shock the German of good taste. To the latter, religion is surrounded by more mystery and more dignity ; it never becomes a commonplace thing ; rather it is viewed as something distant, outside and above him ; it is a sacred table of the law, to be enshrined in a suitable casing of formality and solemnity, and not to be dragged profanely into the ordinary haunts of life. As a German friend who knew England well once put it : "We decorously keep our religion always on the shelf ; you take yours down every day, and handle it without respect."

It is remarkable, too, that this jealousy for the "dignity" of religion may characterise the freethinker quite as much as the normal believer. I remember how on one occasion a doctor of my acquaintance, an avowed and cheery agnostic, who would have resented any pretension on the part of Church and clergy to concern themselves in the slightest degree for the welfare of his soul, protested furiously in the hearing of an amazed circle, familiar with his attitude towards religion, against the dramatic representation of the Gospel story at Oberammergau. It was indecorous, profane, blasphemous ;

religion should not be parodied in any such way; it was a scandal to the Church ; the law should sternly prohibit such unseemly occurrences. And yet the man whose feelings were thus most painfully outraged by a spectacle which to the majority of religious minds appeals with the profoundest force, prided himself on his complete emancipation from ecclesiastical traditions, and was wont to sum up his religion in the old German proverb, *"Thue recht und scheue Niemand!"* ("Do right and fear nobody!") It was one of many instances of unconscious self-revelation which convinced me that behind the cultured German's airy profession of scepticism there is generally a spirit of profound reverence for religious things — a reverence which here no doubt missed its aim — and often a genuine religious feeling and temper.

The characteristic German method of religion — objectivity — I never knew better expressed than by the way in which the public newspapers treat religious questions when occasion requires them to touch a theme so outside their habitual cogitations. The principal Church-festivals of the year — Christmas, Good Friday, Whitsuntide, the Commemoration of the Dead, and Penance Day — are seldom passed over, even by the most secular of daily journals, without discussion, in thoughtful editorial articles, of the religious suggestiveness of the

seasons. And the odd feature of these religious essays is the singular detachment of the writers. Christianity is gravely considered as an institution but newly discovered, which it is the editorial duty to make known to the world with all due formality, and its leading doctrines are exhaustively explained and criticised as though nobody had ever heard of them before. The following passage is taken as an illustration from the principal Berlin Radical journal. It sounds crude and pedagogic, and yet it would read strangely in the editorial columns of an English — still more of a French — newspaper given to fighting rough political battles all the year round :

"The content of the teaching of Jesus, as historical investigation has recovered it from the distorting accretions of time, was the command to love God with undivided heart, and to do self-sacrificing service for one's brethren. Those who fulfilled these commands were given the prospect of bliss, of the complete realisation of their wishes, and of redemption from all evil. Jesus offered Himself as the helper ordained of God to proclaim God to men, and to guide them to Him. He offered His life in order by that sacrifice to ensure to all the forgiveness of sins."

A passage like this (and it is not singular), characterised by such refreshing *naïveté* of thought and expression, is at bottom very

significant of the tone of educated German opinion. Christianity is less a personal matter bearing upon life and conduct — for rules of conduct the educated German will go to ethical philosophy —than a profoundly interesting chapter in the history of civilisation, to be studied with entire absence of mental bias, and expounded in laboured treatises, like any other subject of human investigation.

The religious instinct, I have said, is less egoistic in Germany than in England, and it should not be difficult for English people to appreciate this difference, for it is strikingly characteristic of the religious systems prevalent in their midst, and is especially seen in the contrast presented by the Anglican and Nonconformist Churches. It is just the difference, in fact, between the emphasising of reason and of feeling in religious life, between the austere reserve which the former imposes and the indiscriminate retailing of the emotions which is associated with the more popular expressions of religion. Nothing could better illustrate this deep-seated diversity than a comparison of the hymns used in public worship. The German *Kirchenlieder* contain none of that painful self-analysis, that morbid introspection, that emptying out for public gaze of the longings and strivings of the soul, for what they are worth,— in a word, that perpetual assertion of self, in a

spirit so humble in appearance, yet so vain and often vainglorious in reality, which is prominent in English hymns of a certain order. "All great art is praise," says John Ruskin; and may not the same be said of true religion? Certainly the ancient chorals — most of them over two centuries old, and hardly any less than one — which are sung in the churches of Germany would seem to have been written with that idea in mind. Many of these likewise express the varying moods of spiritual experience, yet without spurious self-abasement on the one hand, or indecorous self-exaltation on the other, but the dominant note is that of praise. The music to which these hymns are sung must be heard in its native atmosphere in order to be properly appreciated. Here the place and the personal element are everything,—the plain and sombre, yet impressive, architecture of the church, solid and stable, like the German character itself; the simple yet solemn liturgy, studiously free from ornate accompaniment; the mass of worshippers, singing in unison, their strong and masculine utterance wedded to the rich and dignified harmonies of Martin Luther or Johann Crüger; all this in the traditional way, sanctioned and hallowed by centuries of unchanging usage. The fastidious ear may fancy that it discovers in German church-singing something bald and crude; but it may be questioned whether any

religious spectacle is finer and more impressive in its way than that of a huge congregation of men, women, and children, packed from porch to chancel, and then tier above tier from floor to rafters, break out with one accord, at organ signal, into the measured cadence of some old Reformation choral.

Ungrudging tribute must also be paid to the sturdiness and resoluteness of the Protestantism which is found in the State Churches of Lutheran Germany. There, at any rate, the principles of the Reformation enjoy all the old respect, reverence, and loyal attachment. There it never occurs to a Protestant to inquire how far the doctrine and ritual of his Church may be modified in the direction of pre-Reformation obscurantism without forfeit of title to the Protestant name, much less to resent that name as fallacious and ignoble. The Protestant State Churches of Germany remain, for all practical purposes, just as Luther left them after he had set the national religion in order,— a mighty organised protest against Rome. It is a remarkable fact, significant of the strength of Protestant sentiment, that although the Roman Catholics form so large a section of the population, and although the State has for this reason been compelled, as a matter of political expediency, to adopt the principle of the co-endowment of the two confessions, the word "compromise" has no place in

the Evangelical vocabulary. Protestantism is Protestantism, and Catholicism is Catholicism : so it seems to the clear-thinking German mind, which here neither temporises nor argues, but holds fast to the ancient ways.

The rationalism which is met with in Germany would be far more difficult to account for were it isolated in appearance and confined within certain narrow limits. As it is so strong a characteristic of German thought, and is, in different degrees and forms, common to all classes, there must be causes which operate generally and point to one identical origin. It should, however, be borne in mind that all rationalism is not rank unbelief ; and to confuse the two things, as is often done, is both misleading and unjust. Probably the strongest predisposing cause of the sceptical tendency of the German mind is its great and almost exaggerated love of speculation and criticism, its eagerness of inquiry, its passion for interrogation. "We Germans are an intensely critical people," said Prince Bismarck to me once in a conversation on political questions; "we always find something to find fault with, something that might be done better." But this truly Hellenic fondness for criticism and analysis — a proof of the method and orderliness, as well as the acumen and curiosity of the German mind— extends not only to politics : it operates in every direction of thought ; and if religion has been

specially chosen to bear the dry light of reason, the explanation is simply that it offers infinitely more scope for criticism and speculation than any other subject of human investigation. If anyone is sceptical as to the effect of this hypercritical attitude towards religion, let him refer to the labels that German rationalists attach to themselves in the census returns, which require specific information as to a man's beliefs or disbeliefs. There he will find mention of Rationalists, Materialists, Naturalists, Humanists, Atheists, Deists, Free-Thinkers, Monotheists, Pure Reasoners, Pantheists, Secularists, Theosophists, Mystics, and Cogitants, not to speak of people who claim to have their "Own religion." How many of these classifications would be discovered by an English enumeration of the people, did it take cognisance of their religion? Then, too, the widespread rejection of the current formularies of the Christian religion is also due to hyper-culture, which almost inevitably creates a conscious or unconscious predilection for the religious ideals of classical antiquity. Arnold Runge professed to the close of his life to deplore that Christian doctrine and Christian ideals had dethroned the mythology of the old Germans, and he deliberately avowed the conviction that German culture had as a consequence been thrown back a millennium and a half. The calculation is perhaps rather too exact to suggest

that reasoned justifications of so startling a proposition were attempted, but Runge's attitude itself is far from being rare even to-day. The Greek temper has thoroughly pervaded the German spirit, and has done much to mould German culture and character. The tendency begins in the *Gymnasium*, the tone of which may be distinctly moral but is seldom religious. It was not without reason that the Emperor William II. complained at the outset of his reign that the higher schools of the land were not turning out Germans, but Greeks and Romans, and though the head and foot of their offence in the Emperor's eyes lay in the wrong national and political bias given, the same objection holds good in regard to the mental habit encouraged in those schools in the sphere of religious belief. The influences which surround the young gymnasiasts are pretty certain to be more or less rationalistic ; and when one thinks how strong is the attachment which usually binds together the German teacher and his pupils, it is not hard to understand that the latter readily imbibe their tutor's convictions and prejudices.

That rationalism is rife at the universities will be expected, nor could it well be otherwise when the dominant note of German theology of the past fifty years is remembered. Names like Strauss, Baur, Ritschl, and Hase are sufficient to denote the revolutionary character of modern

theological criticism, and though at present we may seem to be in the current of a reaction against the too daring speculation and generalisation of the past, the work of these men, and of others like them, has borne its natural fruit. One of the best known of German scholars, who adorns an influential chair at a distinguished university— his name it would for obvious reasons be improper to mention — assured me that his known religious orthodoxy had proved a source of serious offence to many of his colleagues, who had made it an obstacle in the way of his ascent in academic office. Orthodoxy in a theologian might be tolerated, but in the occupant of any other chair it was regarded as a mark of weakness. In the Church itself the same spirit is to some extent found. In many pulpits of the State Church orthodox Christian doctrine gives place to simple ethical homily, though it may be questioned whether this is any less to the taste of the hearers. An educated freethinker had been induced to go and hear a popular, yet at the same time orthodox, Berlin clergyman of great influence. "How did you like him?" was asked, when the novel experience was over. "Well enough; but he cannot be a believer." "And why?" "Because the church was full." That was a few years ago, and religious observance in Berlin has become a much more serious thing in the interval, yet the

incident illustrates the tradition which has grown up — fostered by the rationalistic movement — that culture and orthodoxy must somehow be antagonistic. No doubt the rationalism of the pulpit would find more frequent expression did not the Ministries of Public Worship and the Consistories between them rule both Church and clergy with a strong hand. Overt heterodoxy in the clerical office is viewed with grave displeasure, and the pastor who is guilty of it runs the risk of deprivation. Nowadays the principal bone of contention in ecclesiastical circles is the Apostles' Creed. No small part of the clergy would either abolish the Creed from the liturgy or make its use optional. The liberal movement has been strengthened by the action of Professor Harnack, of the Berlin University, who shocked the orthodox party a few years ago by openly questioning certain dogmas of the Creed. His conduct was brought to the attention of the Prussian Minister of Public Worship by a host of ecclesiastical consistories, councils, and synods, as well as by Conservative party conferences, and that official was implored to consider seriously whether the legitimate bounds of academic liberty had not been transgressed. Had the orthodox party had their way, the offending professor and all his sympathisers would have been removed from their offices, but the Minister appealed to declined to respond to the charitable challenge.

It is often made a reproach to the Protestant Church, as an organ of Christian doctrine, that the attacks which it has had to bear, and the dangers to which it has been exposed have come from within rather than from without. This cannot be denied, and it is impossible that it should be otherwise. Of necessity, an ecclesiastical organisation established to express the Protestant conceptions of religion must accept the risks along with the advantages of the Protestant position, and one of these risks is the spirit of free and unfettered inquiry, with the consequences, good or ill, to which it may lead. The Roman Catholic Church owes its strength and stability largely to two things,—to the pressure which it claims to exert upon its adherents in the matter of belief and to its machinery for giving effect to this pressure. Its teachings are declared to be infallible ; therefore no opposition, no argument, no appeal can be possible. The work of the believer is half, three-quarters, done for him, and it is his business simply to ratify, by silent and unquestioning assent, the inflexible fiat of his Church as represented by his spiritual superiors. Each functionary in this wonderful hierarchy is within his province omnipotent. Above all stands the Pope, who, speaking *ex cathedrâ*, utters the words of inviolable truth, against which there can be no appeal. The bishops come next, receiving their authority and

command direct from the pontiff, rendering to him absolute obedience, yet in their turn speaking with the voice of law to their priests, and obeyed by these with the same unquestioning fidelity. Finally, the priest occupies amongst his flock a position as authoritative in its way as is that of the bishop above him.[1] Such a machinery is perfect enough for the work it is intended to do, but that work is notoriously dissimilar from the task which a Protestant Church system sets itself. There have been few

[1] *Vide* the *Times*, August, 1900: "CARDINAL VAUGHAN ON CRITICISM OF THE HOLY SEE.—The annual conference of the Roman Catholic Young Men's Societies of Great Britain is being held this week at Chester. Cardinal Vaughan, writing to apologise for his absence, said: 'These are days in which loyalty to the Church should be the keynote of every association of Catholic laymen. This loyalty is often put to the test by the intellectual pride and licence of thought and criticism which characterise modern society in England. There are Catholics who permit themselves to read and discuss whatever is printed, if only it falls under their notice and is written in an attractive style. In their presumption and ignorance, without careful intellectual training and without any necessity, they seem to deem themselves a match against the most subtle arguments and the false presentation, or half-presentation, of facts which they have never mastered or even heard of. They criticise the conduct of the Holy See as though they had a mission to rescue the government of the Church from failure. These public criticisms and attacks upon the Church by children professing to belong to her are proofs of an uncatholic and disloyal spirit. . . . The shepherds are over the sheep, and not the sheep and lambs over the shepherds.'"

periods in its history when Protestantism has failed to recognise that its best chance of effectively competing with the hard and fast *régime* of Catholicism is by emphasising its opposite,—the easy yoke of voluntary acquiescence. The Catholic Church might truthfully claim, were it disposed, that it alone of great religious organisations is able to secure uniformity of doctrine and belief. But the answer of the Protestant Church would be that such uniformity is neither its end nor its ideal, and in no country can this be less the case than in Germany, the classic land of metaphysical speculation and unfettered scientific investigation. Granted that the Protestant Church of Germany may with justification be accused of latitudinarianism ; yet the obvious reason is that liberty is to it a vital atmosphere. Let free thought and inquiry cease in its midst, and both the dignity and the historical meaning of Protestantism will disappear.

It is, however, amongst the working classes of the towns that rationalism is found in its crassest forms. Here it is not merely a matter of reservation on this point of faith and individual interpretation on that, but of outspoken infidelity and materialism. Thanks to the persistent agitation of Social Democracy, which has been encouraged by the political and social conditions which environ the lives of the masses, and by the past unsympathetic attitude of both

the Church and the cultured classes towards labour, the urban work-people of Germany have in a body transformed themselves into a resolute and uncompromising party pledged to the subversion, if may be, of the existing economic, political, and religious systems. His Socialism is the true religion of the average German working-man, and Socialism involves for him not merely the advocacy of a new industrial order, but the practical rejection of all theistic belief. A Court of Industry which had been formed in Barmen of twelve employers and the same number of work-people, for the investigation of labour disputes, was being sworn, when seven of the work-people declined to take the oath on the ground that "They were atheists, and could not say, 'So help me God!'" They agreed ultimately to repeat the usual formula, but only on the understanding that their action signified merely a mechanical asseveration of good faith in the discharge of their duty. On this subject of Socialism and irreligion, I cannot do better than repeat a few words which I wrote some years ago, for they need no modification. "It is not in the domain of economic doctrine that the influence of Social Democracy upon the working classes of Germany has been most baneful. Economic theories and beliefs, while they must more or less find expression in a man's views of the world, and especially of

social relationships and institutions, do not necessarily touch the deepest springs of life and character. Where Social Democracy has done most harm is in giving to the labouring classes an estimate of life and of religion which cripples morality, and may make it well-nigh an impossibility. Its science is taken from Büchner, Häckel, and Darwin ; its philosophy from Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, and Hartmann ; and so far as theology is regarded at all, it is seen through the media of Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Renan. Into a crucible of imperfect knowledge and dishonest synthesis these unpromising, and in unskilled hands dangerous, elements have been placed, and the product has been a rationalism of the crudest, nay, grossest character. That Social Democracy should be hostile to the Church is explicable enough, if lamentable ; and if the leaders of Socialism had stopped at denunciations of ecclesiastical expressions of Christianity, their action would not have been beyond remedy. What has been done, however, is to take away from a large part of the working classes all respect for religion, all supernatural faith, all recognition of supreme and objective ethical laws. The Socialist Congress of Erfurt did, indeed, affirm the maxim that 'Truth, justice, and morality should be recognised as the guiding principles of all members, both towards one another and towards all humanity, without

regard to race, religion, or nationality.' But whether truth, justice, and morality will flourish on atheistic soil remains to be demonstrated. The experiment is being tried, and it is a hazardous one."

It will not be amiss to refer here to a subject which, in the opinion of many of the most thoughtful Germans, has a close connexion with religion, and which, in any event, is a part of the broader question of morality. I refer to the old problem of the frequency of suicide in the kingdom of Saxony. The problem has attracted close attention for many years, yet, unfortunately, without any very satisfactory conclusions being arrived at, for almost the only result of investigation is to discover the difficulties which beset any attempt to fathom the mystery. It is a notorious fact that in Saxony the suicidal mania is far commoner than in any other part of Europe, and the most various speculations have been advanced as to the explanation of this unenviable circumstance. Some scientific inquirers have ascribed it to peculiarities of national character, connected with the blending of Wendish with German elements, and especially to the tendency to extinction which appears to be strong in the Wendish blood, which tendency takes the active form of self-extermination. Other explanations which have been suggested are : (1) The military system, (2) the modern

economic stress and strain, (3) poverty, and (4) materialistic views of life. As to the first, however, Saxony does not occupy a peculiar position; and if universal military service were directly responsible for its abnormal number of suicides, the other German States should have the same reputation, which is not the case; while, on the other hand, it is a proved fact that suicide in the army is declining. The second and third factors seem more probable, though here, again, it is to be noted that while the material condition of the masses on the whole is decidedly improving, though still poor enough, suicide is on the increase. Moreover, there is as dire poverty out of Saxony as in that State: nowhere is there more than in the Polish districts of Prussia and the rural districts of North Germany generally, where suicide is not an obvious consequence. Further, it must be noted that it is not overwhelmingly the poor who thus seek oblivion, for nearly every class of society contributes its share to this doleful death-list. The final cause advanced — the prevalence of materialistic beliefs, tending, as these do, to the depreciation of human life — has undoubtedly a great influence, though it is questionable whether Saxony is in reality more irreligious than the rest of the Empire. A Saxon physician of eminence came to the conclusion that the suicidal tendency might be attributed to a "certain

excitable sense of honour in the character of the people, and to their unhealthy advanced culture; but it shows quite clearly that the possession of the pure Evangelical teaching does not preserve our people from moral aberration."

Probably the explanation last suggested contains, on the whole, the strongest elements of probability. Yet it seems to me that there are still other influences to which sufficient weight has not hitherto been attached. They are the nervous, highly strung temperament, the vein of sentimentality and romance, and the impulsiveness which are present in so marked a degree in the German character, though to these must be added a sensitiveness of personal honour which is apt, often on quite trivial grounds, to place death before actual or apprehended disgrace. A German will see romance in suicide, where a cooler-blooded Englishman will see only dismal tragedy, and the former will rush to his end while the latter is systematically arguing out the question, "To be, or not to be?" debating it from all sides, and asking himself whether so extreme and irretrievable a step is really worth while. Extraordinary mediate causes of suicide occur in both countries, but Germany, in this respect, has the uniquer record of the two. Some years ago there was exhibited in a Berlin Art Exhibition a strange painting bearing the title, "Tired of Life" (*Die Lebensmüden*),—a picture

which could hardly have been produced by any but a German artist. Two figures—a youth and a maiden—bound fast together by rope, were shown in the act of throwing themselves from a jetty into a lake. The scene was depicted with complete realism and exactness,—the expression upon the faces reflected the emotions which the occasion would suggest ; the attitude of the lovers was severely "naturalistic" ; the very water seemed to be consciously anticipating its prey. To the ordinary healthy, non-German mind, the picture, as a picture, suggested the ludicrous ; for whatever pathos it might otherwise have suggested was effectively destroyed by the fact that the girl's hat was a conspicuous triumph of the milliner's art, and the rope prosaically new. One might seriously philosophise upon the artistic mood which had sent the painter to so strange a motive, but the picture itself, to an Englishman, seemed grotesque. Yet, before this canvas crowds of people—for the most part of impressionable years — stood every day, from morning till evening, as long as the exhibition was open. The Berlin Press devoted endless columns of description and morallising to it, and it was for a time the fashionable theme of conversation. Not only so, but the imagination of the painter was shortly afterwards translated into actual fact, for the very tragedy which he depicted was enacted in a neighbouring

lake, and the same thing has occurred more than once since then.

How strongly impulse and the sense of honour together act in disposing to suicide may be judged by the fact that of a year's deaths of women in Prussia from this cause, over thirteen per cent. were certified as having been due to remorse, shame, and fear of punishment. That premature death is largely resorted to owing to discontent, morbidness, and pessimism is shown by the fact that of a year's suicides amongst men in Prussia, fourteen per cent. were declared to be due to "general weariness of life," and this did not take account of the far larger number due to want, lack of employment, and similar rational causes. It is noticeable that the greatest number of suicides takes place at an age in which the victims have had opportunity of tasting life, and of finding it either good or bad. An analysis of the suicides in Saxony during many years showed that 0.9 per cent. fell to the age of 14 years and under ; 10.2 per cent. to 14–21 years ; 15.3 per cent. to 21–30 years ; 34.9 per cent. to 30–50 years ; 31.6 per cent. to 50–70 years ; 5.4 per cent. to 70 years and over ; the remaining 1.7 per cent. being of unknown age. If published statistics are any guide, the number of German suicides which could not, by any exaggeration of terms, or any rational use of evidence, be attributed to mental aberration is

particularly large. In England, we know, coroners' juries are specially empanelled to declare every suicide to be the result of "temporary insanity," the healthy and convenient view prevailing that nobody in his senses would take his own life,—an assumption which, from one point of view, is probably correct enough. In Germany the motive of suicide is not so lightly settled. If possible, a reason is discovered and assigned, of course on circumstantial evidence, and in the official statistics the acknowledged cases of mental disturbance (or "disease," as the legal form goes) bear but a small proportion to the whole. No considerations of false delicacy prevent suicide from being openly attributed to drunkenness, or vice, or shame, when facts point to such a conclusion.

Attempts have often been made to establish comparisons and contrasts between the different States in point of morality, criminality, and the like, from the standpoint of religious confession; but it has proved a difficult and, indeed, an unprofitable task. As between the Protestant and Roman Catholic sections of the community it has been pointed out that while the numerical ratio is roughly two to one, there are considerably more convictions for criminal offences amongst the Catholics than the Protestants. But it would be futile and unfair to draw from this bald fact any general moral conclusion in favour

of one Church to the disfavour of the other. The simple truth is that the principal zone of criminality in Germany happens to be coterminous with those portions of the country — the east and north-east of Prussia, as well as a portion of Bavaria — in which the population, while overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, is at the same time relatively low in the intellectual and social scale. To show how misleading any such comparative figures would be, it is only necessary to mention the fact that there are isolated portions of Protestant Germany which rival the most criminal districts of Catholicism, and, conversely, Catholic districts which rank with the most law-abiding spheres of Protestant influence. To draw any such religious comparison would be to ascribe to ecclesiastical differences characteristics which are in reality the result of racial and social moments.

CHAPTER VIII

WOMAN AND THE HOME

IN a country where public life is capable of so much further development, and where civil and political franchises and functions which in other lands have come to be regarded as the rights of the common citizen are so grudgingly bestowed upon men of even the highest intelligence, it is no wonder that the position of women is not an ideal one. Germany has, however, a woman's question and a woman's movement, and the progress which they have made during recent years is noteworthy, considering the prejudices and practical difficulties which have had to be confronted and overcome at every step of the way. If anything could convince the sceptical that the German woman stands not where she did, it will be the fact that within the past year there has been established in Berlin a successful Women's Club, open to aristocratic members, of whom six hundred are solemnly pledged to meet for discussion and

social intercourse once a week; and, nevertheless, there are those who doubt that the world moves.

Times have changed, and with them modes of thought, since a famous German educationist long ago justified the higher education of women on the ground that "A German husband ought not to be bored by the intellectual shortsightedness and narrowness of the wife at his domestic hearth." Nowadays the case for women's higher education is supported by stronger and higher reasons, and chiefly by the fact, which no longer has to plead for recognition, that "woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse," and so has a life of her own to live, an individuality of her own to cultivate, and, if may be, to realise. From this discovery has proceeded the woman's movement everywhere. Yet Germany is better off than most countries, in that it has long been in possession of abundant and excellent facilities for the higher education of its girls. It is one of the most beneficial results of the hard-and-fast German principle of placing all schools — even those in private hands —under direct State control, that a high standard is universal, and the education which girls of the middle and higher middle class may obtain, even in small provincial towns, is both liberal and inexpensive. The idea of sending girls of this class into life with a so-called education

which scarcely outdistances the restricted instruction of second-rate urban elementary schools — an education in which mathematics stands merely for arithmetic, English for the geography and a smattering of the history of a single country and the bare proprieties of grammar, and the study of languages for a questionable capacity to turn bad English into worse French — would fill the instructress of a German "higher daughters' school" with unspeakable horror. She would see to it — or the State in her stead, were she by any possibility indifferent — that her girls thoroughly mastered the political and literary history of their own country and the outlines, at least, of European history and literature as well ; that they were versed in Greek and Roman as well as Scandinavian mythology ; that French and English were understood and spoken almost as mother-tongues,—for the Germans in general are heaven-born linguists,— and that algebra and Euclid were studied as systematically as in English grammar schools with a mathematical leaning.

When German girls from the middle class upward leave school it is, in fact, with a breadth of culture which would astonish those who are satisfied with the definition of that much-abused word "education" which passes current unrebuked in England. In later life, comparing rank with rank, it may be questioned whether the

German woman is not on the whole better informed and better read than the man, though the latter's mental equipment may bear more visible traces of the formal school grinding which has been undergone. He will never forget his Latin and Greek,—so thoroughly are they drilled into him from the *Sexta* of his *Gymnasium* upward,—but he is one-sided, and the distractions and disturbances of practical life not seldom put a period to his further mental development. The German girl, who in the course of time takes upon herself domestic responsibilities, first in her parents' home, and later in one of her own, has also to contend with influences which are in general opposed to zeal for study ; but all the spare moments she has are devoted to books. To these she instinctively flies in her leisure, just as the man resorts to his newspaper ; and in her case there are special compensating circumstances which encourage the studious temperament. The very detachment from public life and concerns which training and conventionality have imposed upon German women, while it unquestionably narrows their range of thought, has the effect of throwing them upon their own resources, and so it happens that what they lose in knowledge of the world and in wider human interests they gain in the cultivation of intellectual and, still more, of æsthetic tastes, in the possession and enjoyment of a quieter outlook on life

and a happier feeling of contentment with their lot. For the German woman is neither restless nor ambitious, or, at least, her one ambition is to see the household over which she rules orderly, harmonious, and attractive to those for whom it exists. But this does not mean that she is of necessity a sort of domestic drudge. The idea most frequently associated amongst English folk with the German *Hausfrau* is an absolute travesty of the reality ; for the picture which the word calls to the mind of the average person is that of a middle-aged matron, dowdily dressed, busying about between kitchen and dining-room, with a bunch of keys at her waist and the odour of dried herbs clinging to her vestments. The picture is altogether imaginary, and having served its day and generation faithfully it might well be discarded, with some other curious fictions about the German household,—as that sausage is the staple food of the rich and *Sauerkraut* of the poor.

It is true that the German housewife does her full share of the domestic tasks—and sometimes a little more—and justly prides herself on the fact that her knowledge of the ins and outs of the *ménage* extends to the slightest detail, and that every single punctilio of household duty is regulated by herself. But this is only one, and the most commonplace, expression of the personal virtues which are behind, and which make

up her character,—industry, thorough-goingness, fidelity, and, above all, a truly religious appreciation of and devotion to the responsibilities and sanctities of home life and home government. Not only so, but the German *Hausfrau* is an illustration of the perfect compatibility of the most admirable domestic *Tüchtigkeit* (which means thoroughness and efficiency combined) with intellectual tastes and accomplishments, which latter are not less real because no wider sphere for their display is sought than the limited circle of home companionships. The idea that the "homeliness" which is so generally and so truly attributed to her implies the quintessence of domesticity is a ludicrous fallacy. The history of German letters, German science, German art, is full of shining examples of wives and mothers who, without making noise or parade in the world, without, indeed, being heard of outside their own homes and social circles, have, in their own quiet way, played a powerful part as heralds of culture and progress. The life of the heroic widow of Jakob Andreä, the famous theologian, will never cease to point its inspiring moral. She was left penniless with a young family to provide for as best she might. Sympathising friends advised her not to quarrel with fate, but to make up her mind at once to bring up her children in a lowly sphere of life,—her boys as artisans, and her girls as useful money-

earners of any kind. Calling her lads together, she tore off her widow's veil in their sight, as she said : "Even though I should have to sell this veil, I will educate you in your father's place ; I will work for you, and starve for you, if only you are true." She did it, and German theology gained a still greater Andreä in the son Johann Valentin, who rose high in the Lutheran Church. Such *Hausfrauen* German households have never lacked,—women who have cultivated a serene ideal of family life, who have not grudged the undivided bestowal of their gifts upon the right training of their sons and daughters, and who have never been impatient to share the wider concerns and less tranquil ambitions of men, so long as their own supremacy in the home was undisputed.

Nevertheless, it would be idle to pretend that German women are in general willing to fall in with the lot which contented their mothers and grandmothers ; and the problem which exercises the minds of the advocates of emancipation, is how to secure to them a legitimate place and influence outside the home without any sacrifice of the high national ideal of home and of woman's position in it. Where women have suffered hitherto is in the refusal to them of proper scope for the exercise of their capacities. They might be educated to the highest pitch, but they have been tolerated in few of the spheres which men

have immemorially set apart for the special play of their own activities. It is probable that the average male would rub his eyes in surprise were he asked to believe that the position of his wife and sisters is not in every respect what Divine Providence intended it to be. In his view, the home is the stage upon which women should play the mild drama of her life, and out of the home she is out of her true province. In the words of the proverb, "The house is woman's world, the world is man's house." Yet to suggest that there is any such thing as a conscious repression of woman would be absurd. Marriage may often fall short of an ideal companionship, as elsewhere, but, so far as devotion and fidelity go, the German husband is as good as any other, if not always quite as polished and punctilious as he might be, and the idea that a system of domestic tyranny exists in Germany does not call for serious notice. That in some directions higher views of women are necessary in Germany it would be mere affectation to deny. In the country, and especially in the poorer and more distinctly pastoral States, women take a far harder share in outdoor agricultural work than is fair to their sex. They plough and harrow side by side with the men; they dig the potatoes, as well as plant them; they carry the manure afield in huge baskets of appalling weight; and they thrash the corn; not to speak of work of a

lighter and more permissible character. In the towns, too, it is a common thing to see women drawing small carts along the streets. Sometimes they only assist the dogs, which form the real team, yet frequently they bear the whole burden alone. The physical strain may not in general be exhausting, yet at best one feels that woman is not in her right place drawing carts, however diminutive, of coal or wood or fruit, along the public streets, where well-dressed men pass to and fro, conscious of a superiority to employment so humble and degrading.

In the educated circles of society things are rapidly improving. There the influences that make for the confinement of woman's life within the old narrow bounds are mainly the antiquated traditions and social conventionalities which both sexes share alike, and these are being overturned and broken through. Unexampled efforts are nowadays made to meet the intellectual needs of girls and young women. The higher schools have, as I have said, at all times been excellent, but these have been supplemented in some of the larger towns by *Gymnasia,* conducted on the lines of the best *Gymnasia* for boys. The "sweet girl graduates with their golden hair" have also made an appearance. The majority of the universities have had the enlightenment to open their doors to women, and, while permission to acquire the doctor's title is rarely granted,

facilities for studying side by side with men are being increasingly afforded. That women appreciate the privilege thus offered is proved by the hearty response which they have made to it. The number of female students at the universities in the winter term of 1899-1900 was 644, of whom 406 fell to Berlin, and the rest to Breslau, Bonn, Göttingen, Halle, Kiel, Freiburg, Strassburg, Königsberg, Marburg, Erlangen, Tübingen, and Würzburg. Naturally, the great majority of the fair hearers attach themselves to the faculty which cultivates the widest intellectual interests,— that of philosophy,—while medicine comes next in their esteem, then law, and Berlin has even had a lady student of theology.

Encouraged by this friendly movement in the seats of learning, women are more and more pushing their way in professional life. Time was when paid occupations were eschewed as declassing women of a certain social position. The lady author worked in secret for years before she dare make herself known, and more years had yet to pass before the public extended to her a respectful hearing. Nowadays there is hardly a department of letters in which she has not laid claim to recognition. Not only so, but the authoress of to-day is a recognised power, for success, which condones everything and justifies everything, has taken all point from the satire and all sting from the contumely which

were formerly levelled against her. Not long ago, one of the well known German illustrated magazines offered prizes for the best three stories to be submitted in competition, and when the award of the eminent jurors was examined it was found that all three went to women, though the works compared numbered a thousand. In a less degree women have won distinction in the world of art, while in the practical calling of medicine they have taken a place which is no longer contested. Women as teachers have always been numerous enough. They are to be found not only in higher girls' schools, but in elementary schools, and the inducement is the greater because the State examination is in every case severe. At least half the teachers of the municipal higher schools for girls in Berlin are women, and almost the same proportion obtains in the elementary schools. Hospital and sick nursing attracts a very large and growing number of women ; but here love of a hard and self-sacrificing work induces at least as much as the prospect of reward. Lower in the social ranks there is great rivalry for the positions of book-keeper, typist, telegraphist, and railway ticket clerk, but the last two offices are not, save in a few parts of the country, occupied largely by women. Another occupation to which they have turned their attention is that of public librarian, and in Berlin a special school has been

formed for their training in work of the kind. Less progress has been made in the State service. It is only recently that the Governments have taken kindly to the employment of women in the higher branches, though in Prussia, Bavaria, and elsewhere women are now appointed assistant factory inspectors, and as such are charged with the supervision of industries in which their sex is particularly engaged.

The position and outlook of women are less satisfactory in public life. Philanthropy and religion are spheres to which no restriction necessarily applies, and it is noteworthy that there are now between three and four thousand Women's Associations (*Frauenvereine*) pursuing benevolent, mutual improvement, and social reform propagandism. Participation in municipal affairs, however, is absolutely forbidden them. They may not vote for the election of, still less be members of, public bodies of any kind. Politically they are contemptuously disregarded. It is never certain that women will be allowed by the police to attend simple political gatherings, for the holding of which sanction has been given. It continually happens that such gatherings are permitted on the clear understanding that women and girls shall be excluded, and also that meetings of the kind are dissolved by the policemen in attendance because of the presence of the unenfranchised sex. In passing, it is note-

worthy that not a few women of education and social position are to be found amongst the hardest workers of the Socialist party, and they have taken this extreme step solely out of sympathy with the lot of the masses, and a desire to help towards its amelioration.

The position of women of the manual working classes is pretty much what would be expected from the political disqualifications from which all women suffer. The opportunities of coalition open to them are very limited. It is hard enough for working-men to combine for the protection of mutual interests, but the difficulties in the way of such combination amongst women are generally insuperable, and the discovery that women have joined men's industrial societies has frequently led to the dissolution and prohibition of the latter. Even where working-women are permitted to unite in class associations, the condition is strictly imposed that there must be no breath of politics, or the favour will be cancelled. An announcement of this kind is not uncommon in the newspapers : "The Women's Union of —— has been declared to be a political organisation, and has therefore been dissolved by the police." And why ? Most likely because at one of the meetings of the society some excitable young woman has unguardedly made a remark which the jealous police officer in attendance has construed as of a

political character ; and what is not political in the eyes of a suspicious policeman ? Of nearly fifty thousand women who earn their livelihood in Berlin alone by manual work, only two thousand five hundred have been organised by the Social Democrats, and that after long and strenuous efforts, while all the orthodox trade-unions in the country have not yet enrolled that number of female members. Largely owing to this failure to draw women into the net of industrial combination, their position on the labour market is unquestionably a profoundly unhappy one. The wages they earn are miserably small, the conditions of their employment pay far too little regard to their sex and strength, and scanty earnings and unfavourable surroundings are together responsible in some trades for grave moral evils which every now and then force themselves upon public and parliamentary attention.

One of the most significant new departures in the Socialist agitation is the extension of the movement amongst women of the working class, who now contribute a very large contingent to the party, and, as might be expected, belong to its most uncompromising section. In normal times they can do little beyond proclaiming the Socialist evangel within the circle of their acquaintance; but at election times, when the law is relaxed, they take a full share of agitatorial work, where there is no one to forbid them, by

public speaking, distributing party literature, and canvassing for votes. The party has now a special newspaper for women, called *Equality*, which is also conducted by a woman.

What has been said is enough to show that the woman's question in Germany, while it has made large strides, has a great task before it. On the whole, its aims are far from being intemperate. Here and there are to be found extremists who plead not merely for equality of opportunity as between the sexes, but for the fiction of identity of condition, and who, forgetful of the backward state of the men's question in Germany, seek to attain at one move ideals which are recognised as distant by the more ardent reformers in England. But, in general, the movement progresses within narrow limits and on moderate lines, and herein consists its principal hostage to success.

Following woman into the home, where her position and power are less a matter of cavil or dispute, the German household economy is found to present many special features of interest. More and more the flat system is becoming universalised, even in the country, for it has long been the rule in the towns. The separate house is the exception, and often the trim suburban villa which stands with an air of dignity and "standoffishness" in its own spacious garden will nowadays be found to be the home of several

families, one living above the other, by whom the garden and lawn are enjoyed in common. In the main it is a question of dear land, and consequent high rents. Every class suffers according to its position, but the rack-rents which are making the houses of urban Germany smaller every year, and to a large extent endangering the public health, fall most oppressively upon the small official and the working classes, who pay on an average from one-fifth to one-fourth of their scanty earnings to the landlord. In Berlin rents are generally estimated at so much per room. In the better parts of the city £30 per room is no exceptional figure, bringing the rent of a fair-sized house of eight rooms to £240, while in the newer parts, on the periphery of the city, £15 per room is enough. The small tradesman or small official may get a diminutive dwelling of four or five rooms for £30 or £40; but as such a rent is beyond his means, he lets one room to a lodger — student or clerk — and makes £10 or £12 by the transaction. Hence it comes about that Berlin is literally a city of lodging-houses.

Where cost, or rent, as the case may be, is quite secondary to the desirability of isolation, the self-contained house is still favoured, and those people are counted fortunate indeed who are able to live alone. But the word of the land speculator has gone forth, and both in small towns

and large the flat has virtually conquered. The system has, however, very advantageous sides, and on the score of convenience most practical merits can be claimed for it ; but on the other hand, it offers less privacy and less protection from noise, though custom tends to encourage indifference to what goes on above, below, and on either side ; and even neighbours on the same story, whose front and back doors are not a yard asunder, can and do live together for years without once committing the impropriety of speaking to each other. In the internal arrangements of their houses the Germans of the middle class are, as a rule, laudably simple. There is no useless profusion of furniture to suggest the cabinet-maker's shop. The furniture is accommodated to the room, not the room to the furniture, and every article, besides being needful, is good of its kind. Heavy carpets are unknown. In the centre of the floor there is a rug or mat, but for the rest, where parquet is not used — and it is commoner in houses of very moderate rent than with us in mansions — the floor is painted or stained, both in the interest of cleanliness and convenience. The least satisfactory part of the house is that allotted to the domestic servants. German housewives have of late years found themselves confronted by the selfsame servant problem which has agitated and distressed their fellows

in Western countries, and from the servants' standpoint it was high time that the perplexity came, for their general position is neither a happy nor a tolerable one. That the wages paid are low is a minor matter, considering the fact that they are higher now by a hundred per cent. than a decade ago. The wrongs of the domestic servant relate rather to her treatment in the home, —the unsympathetic relationship between mistress and maid, the inordinate hours of work, the little liberty allowed, and the inferior accommodation provided. Owing largely, no doubt, to higher rents, the bedrooms allotted to the household attendants are miserably small, often dark box-rooms at the end of a corridor, which must be approached by a removable ladder, or doll's-house-like apartments, half room, half cupboard, built off the kitchen wall, and just large enough to receive a single bed, but too low to allow of their occupants standing upright. But the domestic servant is up in arms, and has bidden her tyrants beware. There, as elsewhere, she is acquiring the dangerous knowledge that she holds in her hands her mistress's fate as well as her own.

In the matter of heating, the Germans set English people a lesson both in efficiency and economy. The open fireplace, which seems to have been deliberately designed so as to produce a minimum of heat for a maximum expenditure

of fuel, is almost unknown in these days, though it was formerly common in some parts of the country, and particularly on the Rhine. The two modes of heating in vogue are the fixed porcelain stove and the movable iron stove. The latter is, however, antiquated, and though still largely used, it is regarded as a rude survival, and is rapidly going out of fashion. Projecting from one of the walls, often as far as the middle of the room, the iron stove generates a large amount of dry heat ; but it does this at the expense of physical comfort, appearance, ventilation, and thus of health. Very different is the porcelain stove, which is found in the rooms of nearly all modern German houses. It is a ponderous structure as a rule, and on first acquaintance you are inclined to vote it awkward, if not ugly. Mark Twain did not greatly exaggerate when, describing his first introduction to a stove of the kind, he said that the impression made upon him was that of being in the august presence of a family monument. The comparison may stand ; for the common and older stove, rising four square to a height of ten feet, with its facing of neatly jointed white tiles, giving the rough idea of blocks of marble, may well suggest sepulchral associations. But modern skill and taste—thanks largely to the excellent training afforded to porcelain workers in the numberless art-industrial schools scattered all

over the country — have done wonders in the improvement of the domestic stove. Plain white tiles give place, in the better qualities, to majolica of the prettiest shapes and colours, and the family monuments which nowadays grace the German's drawing- and dining-rooms are veritable works of art and beauty. The stove stands in a convenient corner, and the positions in the various rooms are chosen with a view to minimising the number of chimneys needed for the house, or a row of houses, as it may happen. In the front of the stove, and about a foot from the floor, is a roomy cavity, in which the charge of fuel is placed. This consists either of briquettes, wood, or peat,—coal to a very small extent, and never alone, as it would generate too great a heat, besides being much more expensive. The face of the cavity is covered by an iron door, and when the fuel has become thoroughly burned through—not before—it is hermetically closed. Meanwhile, the heat has been accumulating and circulating through a system of fire-proof earthenware pipes, causing the stove to give off from the whole of its extended surface a gentle warmth from morning till evening without a fresh supply of fuel. As the stoves of several rooms are kept going daily during winter, the adjoining corridors are warmed by natural attraction, with the result that throughout the whole house a pleasant and equable

temperature is maintained all day long, even in the severest weather. As compared with the English system of heating, the stove system has the great advantage that it uses little fuel and wastes none, while the heating is perfect. On the other hand, the absence of an open range and the closing of the stove do away with efficient ventilation, and where other means are not adopted to secure this the disadvantage is considerable.

The food which is found on the average German table is simple enough, though, judging by the number of meals served during the day, the culinary arrangements of the household would appear to require considerable thought and time. There are five meals, spread over twelve hours. The introductory one is known as the "first breakfast," and is taken any time between seven and nine o'clock. Its proportions would hardly commend it to the Englishman, with his addiction to substantial morning dishes, for it consists merely of a cup of coffee, with or without rolls, for inveterate smokers will declare that a cigar at this early hour makes baker's fare superfluous, and also gives tone to the day. At half-past ten or eleven o'clock comes the "second breakfast," a simple luncheon of sandwiches, sausage, or eggs, with wine or beer. In the middle-class household dinner comes as a rule at from one to two o'clock.

Soup is a *sine qua non,* and the skilled housewife will see to it that the same kind does not come to the table more than once a fortnight; for Germany, at any rate, does not share the reputation of the country which has many churches but only one soup. Hot dishes are also an essential, for the convenient cold-meat dinner is an enormity which a German cook would not perpetrate. A good deal more care is bestowed both on the variety and preparation of vegetables than is common in the same class in England, and "cabbages (or any other vegetables) just as God made them" never make an appearance on German tables. Puddings and sweet dishes in general are but little cultivated, but fruits and "conserves" are freely used, though the German cook has an unfortunate prejudice against single fruit dishes, and a fondness for experimenting with unspeakable combinations. About four o'clock comes afternoon coffee and cake round the table. Even the workman insists on making a pause at this hour, and calls the simple collation of which he partakes his "vesper," though the factory threatens to extinguish the custom. Finally, at eight o'clock, comes supper, which is as a rule a substantial meal, for cold meats, both fresh and cured, and fish salads accompany the dark-brown rye-bread, heavy but exceedingly nutritious, and tea or beer. This is not the

place for dissertations on cookery, but several valuable vegetables are needlessly neglected in England which in Germany are very properly held in great esteem. There, English celery, like rhubarb, is but little used,—clumps of rhubarb adorn the squares in Berlin as ornamental shrubs,—but the German form of celery, which English gardeners call celeriac but do not grow, is extensively cultivated for the sake of its large root, which makes a most delectable salad. Portugal cabbage, kohlrabi, and wax-beans (a yellow, wax-coloured bean as large as the dwarf-bean, which is only used as a salad) are also vegetables deserving of more attention.

Several old customs of the table are still observed. As the guests take their seats, a genial "May you dine well!" (*Wünsche wohl zu speisen!*) is exchanged; and when the repast is over, a happy and satisfied "Blessing on the meal!" (*Gesegnete Mahlzeit!*) and a shake of hands all round cement good feeling. In the middle-class household the dishes, both meat and vegetables, are handed round, the fowl or roast being cut up at a side table. First brought to the mistress of the house at the head of the table, she sets them in circulation, either by attendant or from hand to hand, and they return to her when everyone is served, to go the same pilgrimage later, when replenished, if necessary. This custom of passing round is open to compli-

cations, as occurred when an English scholar was being entertained by a company of his colleagues in a certain university town. Dinner had reached the interesting stage of turkey, and as the guest of the evening, the dish was first brought to him. It was a small bird and he a big man, and, being unacquainted with the rule of the country, he thought it was intended to be his undivided portion, and accepted the dish (round, as German dishes are, and so not unlike a larger plate) with becoming thankfulness. He had begun his feast before the joke was discovered by the rest. Uncontrollable merriment seized one after another of the guests, who hastily beat retreat from the room to avoid hurting anyone's feelings, until (so the story goes) the English *savant* was left alone with his turkey and his host. But even this misunderstanding was not as bad as the *contretemps* in which a poor student figured. He was invited to supper, and the joy of a hearty meal was keen and delightful. The dishes had gone round, and, in between, a huge loving-cup of white beer had passed from lip to lip. Then the gas accidentally went out, leaving the company in utter darkness. His host's extremity was the student's opportunity. The white beer glass, he knew, was just before him, and the temptation to take one more draught of the cheering and not too common beverage was

too much for his scruples. He drank in the covering darkness, and replaced the glass, as he thought, where it had stood. When the gas was lighted, the loving-cup was found standing in the midst of a dish of vegetables.

CHAPTER IX

PLEASURES AND PASTIMES

A CULTIVATED German would probably object to the description of the theatre as a form of social pleasure, for he is accustomed to regard it from a graver side. In one of his essays Thomas Carlyle says of the drama that while in England its right to exist is a perpetual subject of Mutual Improvement Society debate, in Germany it is of the very life of the nation. No one who knows Germany, even from the outside, can fail to have been impressed by the serious place which the theatre occupies in the national estimation. Perhaps the first conclusion which the unthinking would draw would be that this fondness for the theatre is a sign of frivolity, or at least of a strong pleasure-loving vein. In reality, such a conclusion would be strangely illogical, and would wholly miss the significance of the theatre in German life. The true deduction is that the theatre is viewed from the educational standpoint, and in a quite

subordinate degree from the recreative. Hence it is that the German town must be very small and insignificant indeed which would not think ill of itself, and regard its educational institutions as wofully lacking, if it were without a good theatre. But the character of the drama cultivated in the two countries will better establish this point. Ask the opinion of any average German theatregoer of the plays which are staged during a twelvemonth by even the best of the London houses, and the reply will be that, excepting the classical works—none too often produced—and a few others, these plays would never be tolerated in Berlin, Dresden, Cologne, and a dozen other German towns; their theatres would not give them, and, if given, their publics would regard them as a degradation of the legitimate drama. "In no town in the world," wrote Professor Fischer, of Innsbruck, recently in an article on the subject, "are there more theatres than in London, and the public pays more for its theatres there than anywhere else, and yet the æsthetic results are *nil*. The repertory is varied; scenic effects have reached the highest degree of technical perfection; the public loves the theatre; but nevertheless art cuts a beggarly figure on the English stage." That is a severe verdict, but it can at least be matched by opinion of equal weight in England. Yet, as if to make still more incomprehensible this national

neglect of the drama and opera, English people flock to Germany in thousands to witness the Oberammergau Passion Play and the Bayreuth performances of Wagner's works, and it has been credibly asserted that tickets to the value of £4000 have been sold in London alone for one Bayreuth season. A well-known English Shakespearian critic complained not long ago of the "practical suppression of Shakespeare on the London stage." Certainly it cannot be denied that the works of the greatest English dramatist are far better known, and, on the whole, better played, in Germany than in the country of his birth.[1] In the English provinces, Shakespeare is seldom heard on the stage, and then only by way of luxury,—say, the rare visit of a famous metropolitan company; but hardly a German town could be named whose theatre or theatres do not regularly give at least the best known of his tragedies and comedies, while the Berlin theatres, both royal and private, devote an amount of attention to the Shakespearian drama which should be very trying to English pride, and equally stimulating to English self-respect.

[1] The following appeared quite recently in a London literary journal: "A German publishing firm in Stuttgart, having issued a people's edition of Shakespeare's dramas in one volume, edited by the German Shakespeare Society, have sold in eighteen months no fewer than ten editions, each of two thousand copies."

Nearly all the characteristics which differentiate the German from the English theatre are precisely those which would be expected in a country which takes the drama seriously. The sensational play, with its run of a thousand and one nights, is unknown in Germany, not because great plays, and plays which grip the public imagination, are not produced there, but because in everything the theatre is viewed from artistic and educational standpoints. Well-known and esteemed plays are periodically repeated, but consecutive performances are not the rule. The large theatres give a different play every night for weeks together, save, perhaps, that popular works are oftener taken on Sundays, when the theatre is more generally accessible by the playgoing public. This custom involves another characteristic of the German theatre,—the stock company. This is the universal rule, not merely in the cities, but in the small towns which maintain theatres, for in Germany the modern descendant of the "strolling player" is literally unknown. Only so would the German manager be able to have at command the extent and variety of repertory which his critical audiences require. The financial difficulty is obviated in part by the less elaborate stage effects with which, in the smaller theatres at any rate, playgoers are contented, and by royal or municipal subsidies, where the

theatres are patronised, and thus are expected to maintain the highest possible standard. Moreover, in a German play-bill an entire theatrical company is never made subservient to some one bright particular star of the footlights, whom it is said to "support." The German actor and actress support themselves. Each has his own place, which is—for him—the principal place on the stage. Individuality is thus more cultivated, and even the humblest player feels that he is something more than a unit in a long line of figures, whose quotient is the chanted celebrity of the hero of the leading *rôle*. One further feature of the English theatre—let it be granted, the provincial theatre comes here in question chiefly—is utterly unknown in Germany, and is as inconceivable there as the paltry sentimental songs which delight our middle-class concert-goers : it is the pantomime. The idea of associating this ludicrous survival with the modern theatre is one of the things which the German playgoer who knows England never succeeds in understanding. To his mind, accustomed as it is to view the theatre as directly supplementary in educational purpose and influence to the school and college, and the drama as one of the highest of moralising agents, such a strange conjunction is rude, brutalising, and monstrous.

One reason for the very high excellence which characterises both drama and opera throughout

Germany is that territorial "particularism" which, while it has in politics been the bane of the country, has been entirely advantageous to culture. As each State has its own capital and centre or centres of Court life, of education, refinement, and art, the drama and opera have been nurtured in many parts of the country independently. For drama, like all the arts, has traditionally enjoyed the special patronage of the reigning house in each State, both in the form of personal encouragement and financial help. Moreover, the pre-eminence maintained by the royal theatres has reacted upon private managers, who have every inducement to aim at the highest attainable standard. Small though his territory is, no living German sovereign has done greater service to histrionic art than the Grand Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. His efforts and sacrifices have created a company of players whose fame is more than national. His son, too, the Hereditary Prince, has done much, by his studies of the Greek drama and the practical application of the results to modern uses, to elevate the stage. The King of Prussia is patron of royal theatres at Berlin, Hanover, Cassel, and Wiesbaden, and the subsidies paid to them are considerable. But the relationship between the Crown and its playhouses is more than a financial one. The entire administration falls to the King or his *Intendant*. Subject to royal

veto and instructions, the latter possesses supreme power in regard to the choice of plays, players, and musicians, and the general management of the theatre for which he is responsible, and even the rules for pronunciation which are issued by his *fiat* have more than the authority of the *Encyclopédie*.

Berlin has for some years possessed a unique theatre, which aims at popularising the drama amongst the working classes. Yet this playing to the people involves no sacrifice either of taste or merit, for only plays of a high character, both literary and moral, are given. The London theatre director who concentrated his efforts upon enticing heterogeneous assemblies of artisans, operatives, costers, and dock labourers to witness high-class plays—among which, shall we say, Shakespeare's took a leading place—would be regarded as an idealist of the not very sane order ; yet add Goethe, Schiller, and Ibsen to Shakespeare, and this is precisely the mission of the Schiller Theatre in Berlin ; and wonderful—or not wonderful ?—to relate, the mission is achieved with complete success. The theatre is carried on by a private company ; and though the combined edification and entertainment of the working classes of the metropolis are the primary object of both director and shareholders, the project has been placed on a hard commercial basis, and moderate dividends have been paid.

The prices of admission range from threepence to six times that sum for purchasers of six tickets at once, and from fourpence to two-and-sixpence where single tickets are bought. Here, as in other German theatres, there is a fixed company, and during the six years that the theatre has been carried on, it has developed a repertory of nearly a hundred and fifty plays. Though the theatre has had a marvellous career of full houses, it is, of course, impossible, with the modest revenue at command—for threepence per seat does not go a long way—to expend great sums either upon actors or upon staging, yet the company is admittedly one of a high order, and is able to stand with credit the criticism of a by no means undiscriminating Press. It is, moreover, an interesting fact that, besides paying its way, the Schiller Theatre is able periodically to invite thousands of children from the lower communal schools to free performances.

If Germany is the chosen home of the acted drama, it is not less the musical country it always was, though the seventh day of the creation might seem to have been reached so far as the production of composers of gigantic genius goes. Love of music must go deep into the national character when men of such stern mould as Prince Bismarck and Marshal von Moltke could own to passionate fondness for the harmonies of voice and instrument. The same trait marks all

classes of the people. How powerful an element music forms in the national life is proved by the mere mention of the German songs, patriotic, popular, military, and academic. In no other country is there so much singing. Everybody sings when he can. Bronzed soldiers sing of battle and Fatherland as they foot it over sandy road and stubbly corn-land to and from their fatiguing exercises. The stalwart gymnasts of the *Turnverein* sing lays which good old "Father" Jahn, their patron saint, left them, as they march to the district festival. Boisterous students, brimming over with animal spirits, break the silence of the streets with their musical homage to wine and the muses, as they tardily turn into their lodgings for the night. Bright-eyed schoolboys and schoolgirls, on botanical study bent, mingle voices in cheerful round or part-song as, with teacher at their head, they eagerly hasten towards the forest, which is so much pleasanter than school on a hot summer's afternoon. Song is life to the German, and it would be difficult to exaggerate either the national or moral influence of this characteristic. Does not Schiller say:

> "Wo man singt, da lass dich ruhig nieder,
> Böse Menschen haben keine Lieder."

So, too, instrumental music occupies a unique place in the affections of the people. The most popular concerts are orchestral ; and it is note-

worthy that the admirable bands which are found in all well-regulated café-gardens (and often in hotels) are not there simply to while away the time of idle guests, but to afford genuine entertainment, and frivolous music will seldom be heard. In every class of society a rare standard of taste prevails. Perhaps nowhere else are concerts in general so classical in character. You may take up the programme of a people's concert, and you will find that the music is of the best kind. Moreover, the uneducated taste —almost worse than no taste at all — which tolerates the admixture of classical and music-hall music in the same concert is never met with. Not less is true artistic feeling shown by the habit of regulating the length of a programme, not by the sum paid for admission, or the hour of beginning, but by the receptive capacity of the cultured ear and mind. But if a German audience is artistic and critical, it is not undemonstrative, be it pleased or disappointed. If the former, its satisfaction is exhibited with a heartiness that admits of no two interpretations. It must be admitted, however, that music-madness is one of the most amiable forms of popular aberration.

Englishmen of all classes are proverbially fond of outdoor exercise, and a healthy tradition is still current to the effect that the battle of Waterloo was won in the playgrounds of Eton and

Rugby. The same addiction to sports and pastimes cannot be said to characterise the German, though he has compensations which his muscular critics in the land of cricket and football are apt to ignore. The military service which the able-bodied youth of Germany is compelled to undergo is of unquestionable physical as well as moral benefit, and it possesses the advantage which the optional seductions of the English athletic grounds do not, that there is little hope of escaping its wholesome discipline. The student world, too, exercises both sinew and nerve in the fencing-club encounters which are arranged at frequent intervals during term, and which bear unlovely fruit in the hacked faces and bandaged heads that are always to be seen upon the streets of a university town. But a more practical substitute for sport as Englishmen know it is found in gymnastics. *Turnen,* as it is called, forms an important part of the curriculum of every school, both elementary and higher, whether for boys, girls, or infants; and while the athletic craze has not gone to the lengths one sees in England, it is by no means an uncommon thing nowadays to come across advertisements for higher school teachers in which "gymnastics" is bracketed with philology or mathematics as the qualifications required. The Gymnastic Club (*Turnverein*) is also a popular institution, to be found in every town, and its

exhibitions and contests are events of unfailing attraction. There is even a national athletic meeting once a year, in which clubs from all parts of the Empire participate. It is held in different towns of note in turn, and creates hardly less interest than the great meetings of the English trade-unionists and co-operators. The history of this movement is a very remarkable one. It was Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778 to 1852), still revered as the "Father of Gymnastics," who brought home to Germany the importance for young and old of gymnastic exercise on scientific principles. He first introduced the practice in Berlin in 1811, while engaged as teacher in a *Gymnasium* there, and it soon took hold of the people. Prussia was then in the throes of a national rebirth, and Jahn took a patriot's part in the Liberation War. Returning to his school when the war was over, he allowed himself to be drawn into politics, and, like so many of the finest spirits of that time, he fell under Government suspicion and disfavour, owing to his democratic views, and passed two years in prison. Released, he prosecuted his gymnastic crusade with renewed vigour, and lived to receive the Iron Cross from his King, and to sit in the German National Assembly of 1848 as an extreme Conservative. Prince Bismarck has left it on record that he was strengthened both in physical powers and in courage by his

participation in the exercises of Jahn's Athletic Club, to which he belonged when resident in Berlin as a student. Monuments have been raised to Jahn by a grateful posterity, both in Berlin, where he worked, and in Freiburg, where he died and lies buried. It is solely owing to Jahn's practice and precept that to-day all German schools systematically and rationally combine physical exercise with mental training.

The more popular English outdoor games are as yet but little esteemed in Germany. Cricket has a few enthusiastic followers, but the encouragement they receive is disappointing, for the game, by those who know anything about it, is generally regarded as an Englishman's odd whim. Tennis, up to a few years ago, was only played amongst the English and American colonies, but it is making headway. Even football is slowly winning favour, especially in South Germany, though Berlin owns itself on the way to conversion. Football appeals to people very differently, and it is worth while quoting here the first impressions of a Berlin spectator of the game, as recorded in a leading journal of that city: "On Sunday afternoon [writes the correspondent] an uncommon spectacle was offered to Berliners on the Tempelhofer Feld. Led by a military officer, twenty-five young men were to be seen gathering on the ground, where a space five hundred feet long and seventy feet

wide was measured off, then marked by poles and flags. At each end of the space a linen partition twelve yards high was erected, which gave the whole the appearance of a high tent. These preliminaries over, the young people entered an adjacent beer-house, and soon returned dressed in jockey-like costume. They were football players! The game is extremely simple. An india-rubber ball, enveloped in leather, is defended by two parties. As soon as the attacking party succeeds in kicking the ball through their opponents' goal, they have won the game. Football, which in England is very popular amongst all classes, hardens and strengthens the body, and is therefore of very beneficial influence upon the health." Such an illuminating utterance on the subject of football by a German observer might find a fitting parallel in, say, an Englishman's description of the doings of a Berlin students' fencing-room.

But if young Germany does not play football in winter, it skates, and skates well. The severity of the season and the abundance of water give to skating a place which it cannot take in countries of more temperate climate. Yet, though the North German winter is winter indeed,—insomuch that the frost often reaches that Russian intensity which caused the Emperor Nicholas to say that the two generals on whom he could always rely were Generals Janvier and

Février,—the coldest months are, in reality, most healthy and enjoyable. Though the temperature should fall thirty degrees (Fahrenheit) below zero, the ice crust on the rivers become a yard thick, and cabmen be nightly frozen to death in the streets while waiting for fares, the purity and dryness of the atmosphere make the cold bracing and exhilarating where the far milder weather of England only produces unheroic fits of shivering and a general condition of wheeziness. Day after day, perhaps for several weeks together, there will be a brilliant blue sky overhead, and a dazzling mantle of white on the earth beneath, and each afternoon the sun sinks glowing crimson upon a pathless plain of snow. Winter rules severely, like the despot he is ; but at least his Court is splendid, and even his rigour is not ill meant. The existence of scores of skating clubs, formed for the serious cultivation of an art which lends itself to many athletic possibilities, speaks of the hold which this pastime has obtained upon the affections of young and old. Of late years ski-ing has also become acclimatised in the hilly districts, and in the Black Forest alone its devotees number many hundreds.

While the masses have their special outdoor pastimes, the classes have theirs. Germany is still a country of great hunters, and the larger game flourishes and offers much sport as well as

profit to those who are fortunate enough to possess hunting rights. This is due not more to the abundance of forest and other preserves than to the great interest which the Government takes in the preservation of game and the regulation of its destruction and sale, in the way of forest laws. Red deer, roe, elk, fallow deer, wild boar, and moor and field game are amongst the sportsman's possible quarry. A curious arrangement has been legalised in some parts of Germany,—Prussia is an example. The owners or tenants of large estates—that is, estates of about four hundred acres—may exercise the right of shooting game, subject to the ordinary legal restrictions ; but smaller estates or holdings are combined, and the shooting rights are sold or leased by the local authority, which divides the proceeds amongst those entitled to them in proportion to the extent of their land, due compensation being given to the owners or holders in the event of damage being done to land or crops by either sportsmen or game. For most kinds of game there are statutory close times, and the law is very jealous of any infraction of these ; while the prohibition of the use of nets, traps, and snares applies equally to the owner of the shooting rights and to the illicit coveter of his neighbour's forest goods. Poaching is not so common as might be supposed from the abundance of game. The reasons are the

severity of the law, the careful watch that is kept by fiscal and private foresters, and the restrictions which apply to the sale and transmission of "*Wild*" of all kinds, for these alone make the risk of detection so great that the modern would-be poacher has found the game not to be worth the candle.

> "To give room for wandering, is it,
> That the world was made so wide."

So said Goethe, and the sentiment would appear to be commending itself more and more to his countrymen. The German tourist is seldom met in the British Islands, but he exists, and at the proper seasons of the year may be encountered in every beauty-spot of his native country. Yet the German is certainly not as fond of walking as the Englishman, and the practice of pedestrianism extends over a much more limited social area in Germany than in England, for it is there far more a matter of means than in the latter. But, practical and systematic in this matter, as in most others, the Germans have facilitated tourist enterprise and pleasure in a way that is worthy of all praise. This has been done by the agency of the tourist clubs which exist wherever there is scenery worth visiting. These clubs, which together have many thousands of members,—single clubs having as many as five, six, and ten thousand,—make it their business to

survey the districts in connexion with which they are formed, measuring the distances, fixing guide and kilometre posts, with other convenient directions, making and maintaining roads and paths over mountain and through forest, bridging rivers and streams, establishing efficient hostel arrangements, with moderate charges, marking out famous localities, opening up the finer outlooks, protecting dangerous spots, providing shelters and seats, publishing maps, route charts, and guide-books, and generally making the way of the tourist as plain and easy as possible.

One knows how these important services are done—or not done—for strangers in picturesque and hilly England. Generally, the initiative is left to local government bodies, which seldom go beyond the provision of a couple of benches in the village street, and which regard the making of passable foot-roads and the erection of guide-posts as trivialities too insignificant for their attention. In Germany these things are certainly done better. There is probably no district frequented to any degree which has not been made so easy of access that wayfaring men, even fools (which, alas, many are) need not err therein. There are large and wealthy clubs for the Harz Mountain district, for the Black Forest, the Taunus, Saxon Switzerland, the Thuringian Forest, the Riesengebirge, the Erzgebirge, the

A BLACK FOREST PEASANT GIRL

C. Heyden

Bavarian Alps and Tyrol, and a score of other well-known districts, not to speak of a great number of small clubs which do the same service for districts out of the beaten track of touristdom. Clubs which have charge of wide areas, or areas difficult and costly to work, divide themselves into "Sections," of which a single club may have as many as eighty, each with its special tasks and its special roll of members, whose annual subscriptions—from one to five shillings, as the case may be—are devoted in part to local, in part to general purposes. I can myself speak from experience of most of the districts which have been named, and though the facilities for *orientirung* are naturally unequal, they are better in the least efficient case than those that exist, say, in the Welsh mountains or the English Lake district. The system of road-marking is often very primitive,—perhaps nothing more than letters or crosses in different colours, placed upon prominent stones or trees, —but it is thorough, and saves the wanderer an infinity of pains, besides untold disappointment and loss of time.

Touring is exclusively a masculine enjoyment in Germany. The woman's movement has not set in that direction as yet, and the gentler sex still regards with wonder not unmixed with politely restrained ridicule and mild indignation, the masculine misses, hailing from a certain

island where everybody is supposed to follow his or her own sweet will, who descend upon the favourite mountain and forest resorts of the Fatherland, performing incomprehensible feats of pedestrianism, attired in garments bewildering in taste, fit, and general originality, and coolly belabouring everybody with whom they come in contact with marvellous variations of the native tongue. But an agreeable, lively, fashionable bath, where, devotions to Hygeia duly made, a maximum of distraction may be enjoyed with a minimum of exertion, where fountains play, and music bewitches the ear, and coffee-gardens, with their endless possibilities of chat and gossip, are within easy reach at any moment, —that is the ideal holiday haunt of every German lady who entertains the right respect for herself.

The "bath season" (*Badesaison*) is a very serious institution in Germany, and increasingly so as the well-to-do and leisured class grows. The great exodus to the baths synchronises, for obvious reasons, with the school holidays. When, therefore, the dog-days come round, bringing respite to nervous teacher and overworked pupil, everybody who is anybody disappears for a time from the customary circle ; he (or more probably she) has gone to the bath. In baths Germany is certainly rich. There are Ems, for bronchial weaknesses ; Wiesbaden for gout, and its poor relation, rheumatism, besides

general bracing up; Homburg for much the same, with a preference for royal and diplomatic invalids; Kissingen, whose ferruginous salt springs did wonders for Prince Bismarck; Baden-Baden for cutaneous and rheumatic complaints; Nauheim, with its brine baths, Kösen, with the same,—a place much given up to scrofulous children, on which account it is known medically as the "German nursery"; not to speak of Carlsbad (highly aristocratic) and Marienbad, just over in Bohemia, both famous for hot saline springs; and Gastein, in Austria, which offers eternal hope to the sufferer of that malady of civilisation, the disordered liver; and a host of less popular places.

A certain proportion of the visitors to the baths are attracted solely by their health-giving properties. These are the genuine "cure-guests" (*Badegäste*), and they frequent the springs which best minister to their ailments year by year with unfailing regularity. There are also the fashionable lady invalids,—the pleasure-lovers pure and simple,—and they form the large majority. As, however, each bath offers its own distinctive social attractions, the choice of a resort is for them not the least perplexing of domestic problems. Where circumstances permit of it, the difficulty is solved by taking all the baths in turn, or at least those in which the amenities of life are most notoriously cultivated. But this policy of

strict impartiality is never avowed. Madame is too ingenious, too diplomatic. There must, at any rate, be the show of necessity. So the place of resort for the coming summer having been settled in her mind betimes, the malady which it is warranted to cure has somehow to be contracted, and in order to do this a certain humouring of the family doctor is essential. Wiesbaden, for example, means relief to the victim of nerves, and it is in itself a pleasant, lively resort, offering a perpetual round of delightful distractions, besides being conveniently near the Rhine. Hence it is discovered long before spring is out that a "cure" at Wiesbaden is an absolute necessity this year. An attack of nerves is no improbable infliction for the most robust-looking of individuals, and if you solemnly declare that you have it, not all the doctors in the world can prove the contrary. "So Wiesbaden would be just the thing, Herr Doctor,—*nicht wahr?*" Herr Doctor smiles, and will think about it. With each repetition of the urgent question the doctor becomes more and more convinced that the complaint is real, and should be neglected no longer, and that Wiesbaden may be expected to effect a radical cure. The battle is won. With the family doctor on her side, Madame encounters with confident equanimity the domestic incident who carries the money-bag,—it will be an easy walk-over, and she knows it.

The life of the German baths is pretty much the same everywhere,—whether it be Wiesbaden or Ems, Baden-Baden or Gastein. Some are livelier than others ; some presuppose deeper purses, or at least purses better filled than the rest ; some have longer, some shorter, seasons ; but in all there is the same hygienic routine to be gone through, the same variety of pleasures to be enjoyed in compensation. Drinking the waters is the first and least agreeable duty of the day, and it is generally undertaken very early,—always before fast is broken. In the more popular places, during the rush of the season, long columns of shivering people, each with glass in hand, may be seen as early as six o'clock, slowly filing past the favourite springs which pour forth their unsavoury hot water and health. They take their draught, and go home again, to bed or coffee, as the case may be. It is an odd sight, half humorous, if at least a quarter tragic, and reminds one of nothing more forcibly than of the string of invalids hobbling into the "Fountain of Youth," in one of Cranach's famous paintings. During the day life wears a pleasanter aspect. There are the rendezvous, at well-known hours in the *Kurgarten,* with music of the best ; the tennis parties and drives in the country ; and in the evening *soirées* and balls in the *Kursaal,* besides the amusements which are provided in town by private entertainers. Altogether, life

can be made decidedly tolerable, for the time being, for even the most exacting of connoisseurs in social relaxation. There is, of course, a high bill to pay at the end of it, but that is a matter for the domestic incident, who meanwhile remains at home, languishing or otherwise, according to circumstances into which it would be impiety to inquire. The Germans have invented an expressive name for the husband whose wife is recruiting her health alone at the bath : he is called the "Straw-widower."

Where fashionable complaints play no part in determining the holiday resort, the choice may lie between mountain, lake, river, and sea. Tired brain-workers, and still more the artist world, naturally gravitate towards the Bavarian Alps, and even — before the noisy season breaks in—to the Harz Mountains. The beautiful lakes of Bavaria also entice increasing numbers of visitors every year, and the towns and villages which line the Rhine from Bonn onward to Mayence contain no small part of Germany's roving population during the summer months. North German people of modester means, and especially those with families of young folk, frequent the many lovely spots on the Baltic Sea coast, or, if preferring inland resorts, the Black Forest and Thuringia. Among the more popular haunts of Berlin pleasure-seekers with short time at disposal are Heligoland, Saxon Switzer-

THE RIVER ROADS OF THE SPREE FOREST

Kretschmer

land, and the Spree Forest. This last region, lying a few hours by rail from Berlin, has a peculiar interest from the fact that it is one of the few remaining homes of the decaying Wendish race. The physical features of the country are not particularly attractive ; but it is a curiosity of travel there that the principal means of communication between village and village is by water. Along the water highways you are paddled in shallow boats by stout countrymen ; and though one experience of the kind is novel enough, a second is apt to become monotonous and fatiguing. When he goes abroad for pleasure — as he does more and more every year — the German prefers either Switzerland or the Austrian Tyrol, though Italy in the right season, and Norway and Denmark all the summer through, are nowadays largely visited. France is no longer much favoured, while England is not known at all to the lover of nature, but retains its old reputation as a barren island, cloud-capped and fog-bound all the year round.

To say that the English are not invariably popular at the German baths is to hint at certain constitutional defects of temperament and manners which many travelling English folk, of both sexes, take quite unnecessary pains to force upon the attention of those whose country they happen to visit, and whose hospitality they are therefore enjoying. To speak of the typical

Englishman's thoughtlessness when abroad is to retail a thrice-told tale. Everybody is aware of it save the typical Englishman himself ; and until he acquires the knowledge of his ignorance, and shows fruits meet for repentance, the strictures which are passed upon his countrymen wholesale wherever they show themselves on the Continent will continue as often as not to fall where they are least due. It is astounding that English people who can be absolutely prudish in matters of form at home often commit the grossest acts of boorishness abroad, without apparent consciousness of impropriety. If the following incident is unique it is only so in its character,—not in its spirit. A gentle English girl, incapable at home of the slightest breach of good taste, meets upon a highway in the Tyrol a country maiden of her own age. Everybody knows, or should know before travelling in that part of Europe, that amongst Tyrolese women the rural costume is worn in the better as well as in the lowly classes of society. Struck by the girl's dress, the English visitor accosts her in familiar words, and, heedless of the indignant blush, fingers her ribbons, smells her flowers, and finally, having made a thorough all-round stare, goes on her way without a word of explanation. She is ignorant that she has insulted the daughter of a high-born landed family, perhaps a score of times older than her own,—still

more ignorant that she has increased the English reputation abroad for unpardonable rudeness and thoughtlessness. One hears of such incidents, and it is difficult to reply. The natural excuse, that such conduct is an exception, is true enough, but foreigners are apt to judge English people — as we are apt to judge foreigners — by the particular and not by the general. In the bathing-places the English are not a whit more popular than elsewhere, and the reasons are precisely the same. The following words, taken from a letter which appeared in the London *Times* several years ago, will aptly illustrate the spirit which makes the English people so thoroughly disliked :

"No sustainable objection can, of course, be made to Germans visiting a watering-place in their own country, but this town (Homburg) has been so essentially English for so long a time, that the presence of 'foreigners' is felt to be almost an intrusion. I do not defend our fastidious exclusiveness, which makes us detested in almost every country in Europe, but merely note the fact. The English are a warm-hearted, kindly race, but this insular dread of foreigners colliding unpleasantly with our habits and prejudices causes us to be everywhere misunderstood."

There is a homely little rule, not yet out of date, though often forgotten, the application of

which would enable the most insular and prejudiced of us to judge fairly and candidly the spirit of these reflections. Suppose a German visiting England were so to speak of Bath, what outcries against foreign impertinence, what calls for prompt measures of exclusion against the overbearing alien we should hear! The fact is that there is very little misunderstanding regarding us and our ways on the part of the "foreigner,"—we are so blunt as to allow him no excuse for that. The English who create for their nation so unenviable a reputation amongst "foreigners"—whom we so call even in their own land—achieve that end by the simple expedient of a selfish disregard of others. In truth, it is not reserve and exclusiveness which the "foreigner" resents, for he has seldom any wish to make the acquaintance of visitors who do not take the trouble to disclose their amiable traits; but he does resent, and resent wrathfully, the snobbishness, want of consideration, and discourtesy that are so often shown to him in his own country by those who have invited themselves to be his guests. England has of late years known something of the trials of "splendid isolation." They have probably been bracing and helpful in many ways; they have certainly left her wiser and soberer. But it is no special virtue to stand alone when friends can be had, not, indeed, for the asking,

OLD NUREMBERG

but for the winning ; and the name of England would sound pleasanter in the ears of more than one Continental people, if those who travelled abroad were as careful to take good manners with them as good money.

CHAPTER X

THE BERLINER

AN Empire made up of many States and not a few races naturally offers very distinct contrasts of character. Thus, the Rhinelander stands for vivacity and light-heartedness ; he is fond of pleasure, and looks by preference on the bright side of life. The Bavarian possesses a character of heavier calibre ; he is easy-going, and a good fellow to get on with. In affairs he represents an all-round capacity seldom ascending to marked prominence, but useful and practical, if prosaic. The Wurtemberger is homely and canny, shrewd as becomes the son of a pastoral land, but genuine and trusty. The Saxon is pushing and plodding, not brilliant, though he can always hold his own ; a man given to thinking and acting for himself, and beholden to nobody for counsel or countenance. More than any other branch of the German family, the Prussian specially represents the imperial, military, and official spirit ; the capacity

to govern is pre-eminently his. Love of order, system, discipline has been developed in him under the influence of a succession of able rulers, who led their people as well as drilled them, and who invariably carried through the work they took in hand. He unites not a few traits of the old Roman character. In temperament he is energetic and alert, and he is never found making poetry when his house is on fire; while alive to the serious side of life, he is by no means phlegmatic, and he has time for play as well as for work.

Yet no German type possesses a stronger individuality than the true son of the Empire-city, Berlin, though his evolution has been the work of a comparatively few years. By the "Berliner," as he is understood in Germany, and is depicted in much of the ephemeral literature of the leisure hour, is not meant either the cultured resident of the metropolis on the one hand, or his neighbour at the social antipodes on the other, though nowhere is more character seen than amongst the unlettered folk of Berlin; not the colonists of suburban villadom, much less the members of the military caste, or of that equally close corporation, the bureaucracy. For note well that not every resident of Berlin is a "Berliner," nor would he thank you for insisting on the identity. The type is, indeed, hard to define other than by the name which describes

him to every German ; for the word "Berliner" tells everything there is to know about him, sums up all his characteristics, his virtues, his failings, his gay abandon, his unfailing good-humour, his irrepressible comicality.

Broadly, the typical "Berliners" form a composite section of the metropolitan population to which the commercial, the minor official, and the lowlier grades of the professional class equally contribute. A severe critic of the "Berliner" would say that he is vulgar. Fine in feeling he is not. He is essentially loud and bourgeois in the well-recognised significance of the words, limited in social and intellectual outlook, ostentatious and fond of parade, devoted (the female half of him) to gauds and dressiness,—the "Berlinerin" will picnic in the Grunewald in robes fit for a salon,—given to good living, and riotously extravagant in his pleasures and indulgences. Enter his dwelling, and though all the surroundings should betoken comfort if not affluence, you will find few books there. For he does not read,—he only "takes a newspaper," by preference a certain enterprising journal which is notorious for frivolity and misnamed piquancy.

The "Berliner" is no melancholic by temperament. The shades and half-tones of life's picture have little interest or attraction for him. He is a born optimist, and looks at the world

through yellow spectacles. Time brings him but one message, which he does not fail to hear and honour: "Be merry"; and in ability to get satisfaction out of his existence the "Berliner" is unsurpassed. It may be said that to ignore all but the lighter aspects of life is to miss life's proper proportions, and that the philosophy of pleasure is of necessity shallow and partial. But the "Berliner" is a practical hedonist, and conscious philosophy of life he has none.

Nothing could exceed the good-humour of the "Berliner." He has an inexhaustible patience, and Mark Tapley himself could not have been merrier under difficulties. Is it a public event which draws the whole city into the streets, — a royal progress, a military parade, a political demonstration? The "Berliner" can pleasurably while away the waiting hours as no other, and keep even ponderous gendarmes in good spirits. Truly, all things come alike to him. Let him be on pleasure bent, and nothing can daunt him; pleasure he will have, even though the heavens fall in the most disagreeable of ways, and the very inconvenience and annoyances of the moment are turned to gay account. The meteorological temperament is unknown to him; he has a soul superior to such trivialities. On a wet holiday you may be sure to meet him in the forest and river haunts around

the metropolis enjoying himself to his heart's content ; if not contemplating nature from the recesses of an umbrella, at least contemplating his fellow-man at the table of one of the many tree-overshadowed beer-gardens which he there frequents, and which are an essential feature of his ideal sylvan landscape. You think that the rain has damped his ardour, as it has damped yours. Not a bit of it ; with wonderful buoyancy his spirits rise to the occasion, and out of the gloom and melancholy (as it appears to you) of his surroundings he extracts unfailing jollity. It is a convenient and enviable faculty, that of seeing good in everything, and the "Berliner" possesses it in a rare degree. To him the world is the best possible, and Berlin is its happy cosmopolis. In passing, the invariable rule may be laid down that where you find one "Berliner," you may safely expect to come across many others not far away, for the "Berliner" is gregarious ; he moves about in flocks. He is also a social being, and wherever he may be, and whatever he may be about, he must consort with his kind, — which is neither you nor those like you, but his fellow "Berliners." But it is when throwing himself without restraint into his pleasurable occupations that our "Berliner" shows one of his least dignified sides. Then he is no longer a man, but a child, boisterous, unruly, and hatter-mad.

There are certain favourite breathing-places, not far separated by rail from the German capital, which are shunned as though they were leper settlements at those periods of the spring and summer when the "Berliner" is wont to indulge his questionable propensity for "week-end excursions." For rest-seeking people to visit them in such an association is impossible,—as impossible as to camp out in a zoölogical garden. The "Berliner" means no harm, of course, and it is not his fault that he was made with the spirits of a schoolboy, and all his capacity for mischief; but at such times and places his company is not the most delightful to cultivate,—that is all.

Decidedly the "Berliner's" manners are not of the finest order, and his ideas of chivalry are often of a crude and undeveloped kind. But he is amiably human; his instincts are in the abstract kindly; and he is emphatic on the principle of "Live and let live." Though a regular theatregoer, the church hardly recognises his face, for it only sees him when the festivals come round, or when he is burying his relatives. There is a certain vein of sentimentality in him, but he is not a philanthropist. His giving is spasmodic and uncertain; to-day he may allow himself to fall into unheard-of benevolence,—for a "Berliner"; to-morrow not a charity in Christendom could

draw from him a doit. As likely as not he compounds his obligations to the poor by membership of the "Association against Mendicancy," the advantage of which is that by paying an annual subscription of several shillings you can, with a good conscience, threaten to kick unfortunate beggars down-stairs, and can go to rest every night conscious that you have left no social duty undone. The "Berliner" is said to be humorous. Humour, like charity, is a variable quality, and that which passes as wit in one circle of society would be voted dull, flat, and soporific in another. If, therefore, the "Berliner" be not denied this claim,—and certainly he is fond of jokes,—the qualification is needed that our definition of humour must not be made too searching. Nevertheless, he is distinctly ready at repartee, and many of his witty sallies are embodied in the impoverished proverbial philosophy of the metropolitan *bourgeoisie.*

The "Berliner" has other failings than those which have been noted, though he is not conscious of any one,—the most convincing proof of his humorous sense that could be given. Perhaps most of them may be fairly described as the faults of his virtues. An inextinguishable propensity for seeing the lighter side of things inclines him to an exaggerated fondness for ridicule, and reverence is no part of his

character. As life and the world themselves are a joke, everything tangible and intangible is a fit subject for jest ; and as his humour is not always of the fine and delicate kind, he often falls into untoward breaches of taste. Nor does he learn with experience, for reflection never comes to his aid, and there is no good breeding to put a period to his extravagance and excess. In fine, though the "Berliner" has merits of a solid kind, he has not yet passed the infancy of culture. As raw material, he is a very valuable human element, but he needs, so to speak, clarifying and working up. He has brain enough ; his intelligence is strong and robust ; with all his fondness for pleasure and beer-drinking he is capable of any amount of exertion when the spirit of work is on him. What he needs most is the cultivation of qualities of mind and heart which are there in the rough, and whose active assertion would redeem his present ungainly philistinism.

The mention of the "Berliner" inevitably suggests the gayer aspects of German life. Few great cities more abound in facilities for amusement, and none uses these facilities more largely, than Berlin. Its theatres are many, and every branch of the drama is strongly represented. The character of all the serious playhouses is high, and several at least of the private ventures need not blush by comparison with the Royal

Theatre itself. The opera, too, boasts royal patronage and a special home of its own. The concert halls are, if not numerous, excellent, and nowhere does the tone-artist meet with more intelligent audiences. The music and variety hall is also there in every grade of respectability, for in Berlin, as in other cities, there is here a shadowy side to be seen or passed over. It is in summer that the pleasure-seeking instincts of the "Berliner" are most actively exercised. Then the outdoor life which is alone possible in a warm climate is developed to the utmost. The Zoölogical Gardens and the Exhibition Park are favourite rendezvous both by day and night, and a hundred spacious Vienna *cafés*, open to the street, are not sufficient to contain the multitudes which are at the close of day tempted to a respite from the dull actualities of life by the brightness, vivacity, and innocent gaiety which cause these public haunts to have a singular attraction for leisurely people of a certain temperament.

The *café* occupies a special place in German life, and its popularity strikes every foreign visitor, who, as likely as not, soon falls himself to some extent under its spell. The institution has little in common with the English hotel, less with the English tavern, and none at all with the liquor bar. Though, as the name implies, coffee is a staple drink in these places, there is

no restriction, no exclusion ; the difference lies rather in the fact that, besides being a regular and irreproachable house of refreshment, it is also a centre of the most decorous sociability. To the *café* husbands can take their wives, brothers their sisters, and mothers their children, without fear or scruple. You will never hear bad language, and you will never see drunkenness, either by day or night. One reason for the general high standing of these places of resort is the consciousness that, as they are intended for everybody, it is everybody's business and interest to see that their good fame is maintained. Frequently there is attached to the *café* a large garden, and in summer-time this will generally be found every evening filled to its utmost capacity by respectable, well-conducted people. There is much to be said for this way of passing the closing hours of a sultry day in towns, where arbours and balconies are not for the million. Indoor intercourse in close, stuffy rooms at home is more or less a matter of physical torture even in the evening hours, which, in the height of the German summer, are the only part of the day when one can be said humanly to live ; and he must indeed have a soul above mundane weaknesses who is insensible to the amenities of *café*-garden life under such circumstances. What can be pleasanter than to chat, and listen to well-played

music, in the open air, under the walnut trees, by the light of countless coloured lamps, with every specific which civilisation has devised for the relief of weariness and thirst within call? It is not difficult to explain the townsman's devotion to his *café*. It is attractive in itself, it ministers to the genial, social instincts which are so strong in the German nature, and it is in harmony with the healthy *joie de vivre* which Germans share with the Southern nations. For the French term, having the thing itself, the German has an exact equivalent in the word *Lebensfreude*. We in England, lacking the thing, lack the phrase also. Simple words can be the most faithful of indexes to a nation's characteristics; and the word *Gemüth* and its derivatives, none of which can be translated into English, express another admirable quality which is distinctively German. *Gemüthlichkeit* describes the disposition which unites good-nature with the comfortable optimism that takes it for granted that all is well with the world. "Do not send a philosopher to London, and, for Heaven's sake, do not send a poet," wrote Heinrich Heine in his *English Fragments;* "the grim seriousness of all things; the colossal monotony; the engine-like activity; the moroseness even of pleasure; and the whole of this exaggerated London will break his heart." It was the German love of life as a thing of

delight, of poetry, and romance, which spoke in Heine's severe but not wholly unjust diatribe. In passing, the geniality and equanimity which make the German attractive on the social side, when rightly understood, may help to explain on the economic side the quiet energy which has enabled him to attain his present position in the commercial race of the world. For while he knows how to labour, he knows also how to wait, and he can possess his soul in patience under the most trying circumstances, fortified by the belief that all things will come round to perseverance and persistence.

But if it is love of geniality rather than pure conviviality which sends the Germans to their *cafés*, to insinuate insusceptibility to the latter would be to do them a grievous wrong. Describing the Germans of eighteen centuries ago, Tacitus spoke of them as given to indulgence in the cup. A mighty thirst still clings to the parent race, and has been acquired by inheritance by its descendants everywhere. Germany is the peculiar land of beer-brewing and beer-drinking, for though wine is both produced and drunk by preference in some of the Southern districts, and is extolled by most of the students' bacchanalian songs, beer is emphatically the national beverage. The odd thing is that, in spite of the universal notions about the German's beer-drinking proclivities, the generally accepted statistics of

beer consumption allot to England a prior place. Yet beer-drinking is very variable in Germany itself. Bavaria, though in the South, is the beer-drinking State *par excellence,* with a consumption of fifty-one and a half gallons per head of the population. Wurtemberg follows with forty-one and a half gallons, Baden with twenty-four gallons, and North Germany (including Prussia and Saxony) comes last with twenty-one and a quarter gallons per head; while the average for the whole country is twenty-five and a quarter gallons. Perhaps no more significant illustration could be found of the different lines upon which German and English social custom and tradition have travelled than is offered by the views which are held in the two countries regarding the drinking habit and the temperance question. It has come to be recognised as orthodox English fiscal theory that alcoholic beverages should be regarded as luxuries, and that as such they may properly be subjected to exceptional taxation. In Germany such a view would hardly occur to a Finance Minister, however straitened his resources; there beer is viewed as an article of food, and thus as a necessity, and it is taxed accordingly.

The mode of taxation is peculiar, and not uniform throughout the country. In North Germany the Empire raises a tax of two shillings per hundredweight of malt and corn used in

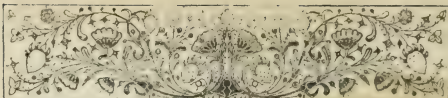
brewing,—a rate which has existed in Prussia unchanged almost since the beginning of the century,—while in Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, and Alsace-Lorraine higher State (instead of imperial) taxes are levied, though, on the other hand, these States pay into the Imperial Treasury annual amounts equivalent to the proceeds of the North German tax when reckoned per head of the population. Repeated attempts have been made by the Government to increase the imperial beer tax, but thanks to a universal vested interest in this popular beverage, there is hardly a party or a group in the Reichstag that can be induced to listen to the proposal. Even the import duty on beer is only one or two shillings per hundredweight. The entire annual proceeds of the beer taxes and duties which are raised by the collective States of the Empire barely amount to four million pounds, which is less than a third of the amount similarly raised in the United Kingdom, with its much smaller population ; and while the beer tax per head averages six shillings in England, it is only tenpence in North Germany, including Prussia and Saxony.

As to restrictive laws, though the German loves to feel the paternal arm of the State girding him around, it has hitherto proved quite impossible to obtain public approval for such a regulation of the drink traffic as would be universally regarded in England as wholly inadequate.

The Imperial Government has on two occasions during the last twenty years seriously tried to legislate upon the question, but without the slightest success ; and it is noteworthy, as illustrating the radical difference between German and English political parties bearing the same name, that the principal opposition came in each instance from the Liberals, whose leader has declared, "Nothing of any consequence can be done to discourage drinking by police and punishment." It is not long since a congress of German jurists, after deliberation and debate over the question whether the State should regard drunkenness as a penal offence, passed an emphatic negative resolution, and followed this up by declaring itself against any special legislation to combat habitual inebriety and dipsomania.

Fairness requires the admission, however, that in spite of the prodigious amount of drinking which goes on, drunkenness is far less common than in England, and from the standpoint of public and private sobriety Germany's reputation is very high. It is noticeable, too, that acute alcoholism is generally the result of the drinking of spirits, and in a less degree of wine. Beer may make people stupid, as Prince Bismarck once said,—and possibly other things as well ; but in Germany it cannot be called a prolific source of inebriety. The reason is not that the German beer-drinker always quaffs wisely and

well, but that the majority of German beers are light, and are as little comparable with the strong English ales in excitative power as the German country wines are with the port of the South. It is only in quite recent times that there has sprung up in Germany a temperance movement on the lines of that which has played so l[illegible]ge a part in English social life for over half a [illegible] movement is carried on by an [illegible]isation [illegible] the "Association against the Misuse of Sp[illegible]rinks," and, though [illegible] influence is said to be spreading rap[illegible] and [illegible] and count[illegible].



CHAPTER XI

POLITICAL [illegible]

PROGRESSIVE [illegible] is in many things, and in none more than edu[illegible] may at first sight seem strange [illegible] State should [illegible] maturity it is so far behin[illegible] countries. Yet it must [illegible]membered that all progress is relative [illegible] degree and variable in character, according to the peculiar circumstances and traditions of every nation. If, therefore, Germany continues to-day to be a country of limited autocracies, the reason must be looked for in the accidents of its history. Granting also that these autocracies are not compatible with English ideals of government, the statement of that fact requires as a correlative the admission that English ideas of government, if applied in Germany without discrimination, would prove for a long time entirely unworkable. This is said not in defence of the political systems under which the German sovereigns possess so much real power, the people so little,— for whether

these are good or bad is hardly a question which the outside critic is called upon to decide,—but rather by way of explanation. The division of the country into so many petty principalities, the absence during so long a period of its history of any dominant central power, the wars without and the feuds within, the patriarchalism which would seem to be indigenous to German soil,—these are causes sufficient of themselves, without reference to peculiarities in the national mind and character, to account for the failure of Germany to keep abreast with the more liberal ideas and institutions which are prevalent in Western lands. Here, however, we must concern ourselves with the facts observable to-day, rather than with explanations of why they came to be as they are; and to the intelligent Englishman, brought up in a bracing political atmosphere, and accustomed to forms of personal liberty which are the result of centuries of organic development, the limitations by which political and civil life is beset in Germany are profoundly interesting.

The sadness with which the Englishman, by repute at least, takes his pleasures is by the German — who is more than a match for him in the fine art of living rationally and happily — allotted to politics. A pursuit which to the Briton, thanks to the system of government under which he lives, and to the opportunity which it

affords for the free play of thought and speech, is a source of never-failing interest and healthy mental discipline, is to most Germans one of the most sterile and lugubrious of exercises. It is not that the average German of intelligence — at least in these days — is indifferent to politics, for his mind is too alert, too critical, too inquiring to ignore so uncommon a source of speculation and controversy ; but rather that politics as a practical science is unprolific, and, so to speak, leads him nowhere.

The German politician is certainly stronger on the theoretical than the practical side, and in general he is wonderfully well informed. His interest in foreign politics is far greater than the Englishman's, though ignorance and misconception enough prevail. One may judge of the place which foreign affairs take in his mind from the newspapers. Not merely the large daily journals but the smallest weekly provincial prints devote an amount of space to foreign letters and to leading articles discussing foreign questions which will never be seen in the same sections of the English Press ; and this characteristic of the newspaper is no untrue reflection of its readers' interests. I remember meeting in a small town in Central Germany a communal schoolmaster, who had for years made a study of the Irish Home Rule question. Mr. Gladstone's first Bill on the subject was at the time

under discussion, and this rural politician had mastered every one of its details. Not only so, but he had long before elaborated a most ingenious plan of his own for the pacification of Ireland and the satisfaction of the legislative aspirations of the Nationalists. It was certainly original, and in theory it worked admirably; the only defect was that it failed to make sufficient allowance for human nature. But whoever heard of an English village schoolmaster making a lifelong study of, say, the settlement of the Polish question, or the treatment of the Czechs?

If practical politics are a failure in Germany the system of government is altogether responsible, since it has been so devised as to afford the very slightest inducement to participate in political life, and absolutely to repel those who, though capable of bringing to bear upon public questions well-balanced judgment and acute knowledge of the world, think too well of themselves and their time to spend their lives in ploughing the sands. It is a commonplace assertion of our times—may it not also be said that the allegation is a symptom of the all-prevalent spirit of doubt and distrust?—that popular parliaments are now no longer merely on their trial, as they were said to be a generation ago, but have proved awkward and inefficient devices for applying to the community that irreducible minimum of compulsion which is of the essence

of good government. Under the parliamentary system (so it is said) the modern legislator is apt to mistake vexatious forms of coercion for legitimate regulation, and at best he succeeds in achieving infinitesimal results in return for a prodigious expenditure of time. Let it be confessed that our parliamentary machinery has not for some time worked with the ease and regularity and success which, justifiably or not, we have been wont to expect of it. Yet, at any rate, this may be said in mitigation of the defect, —if defect must be admitted,—that it has not arisen from any lack of interest or activity on the part of those who direct the machinery, or yet those who furnish it with motive power. In other words, it is not slackness of political thought, and not weakness of political life, of which complaint must be made in England, in France, in the United States. The one may have suffered in tone and depth, as all things must suffer in an age characterised by haste and restlessness, the other have suffered in motive and direction, but the decadence in each case is qualitative only : in pathological language, the malady is functional, not organic.

In Germany, however, it is quite otherwise. There political life suffers from an inanition which makes health and vigour impossible. It fails to draw to it the nation's best talent and energy ; it fails even to enlist to the extent that

is desirable its cruder and less disciplined forces. And the reason is not, as might be alleged in some countries, a reaction against exaggerated democratic tendencies, for these tendencies have never been allowed to get out of hand in Germany, but rather the absence of incentive, of stimulus, of attraction. But here we stumble upon contradiction after contradiction. The Parliament of the Empire—the Imperial Diet—is elected upon a suffrage far broader than that which exists in England, yet upon the policy of the Government it has little influence save negatively, and upon its constitution none at all. I say that its influence is negative, since the Diet's only way of making its power, such as it is, felt is by pursuing a course of resolute opposition and wilful obstruction. To begin with, the highest member of the Government, the Imperial Chancellor, is chosen by the unqualified will of the Emperor, by whom alone he can be removed from office. Parties may move up and down on the see-saw of popular caprice and favour ; majorities may come and go ; political leaders may rise and fall ; but the head of the Government continues the same, given but the grace of his sovereign,—against that rock neither Parliament nor populace can prevail. So, too, with other members of the Government, though they are few ; it is the imperial breath alone which makes and unmakes them.

But while the Ministers are but the mouthpieces of their master, the master is, so far as direct legislative authority goes, no more powerful than the meanest of enfranchised citizens. That is, he cannot himself, by constitutional right, either pass a law or prevent one from being passed. Where, then, does legislative power rest? In two places,—in the Federal Council, and in the elected Diet, which bodies divide it between them equally. Nominally, either can initiate legislation ; in fact, neither can pass a law nor repeal one without the co-operation of the other, though in common practice the Government virtually dictates to the Diet the legislative programme to which its attention shall be given. Hence it comes about that the functions of the Diet are almost exclusively critical. Now and then a party or a private member is fortunate enough to obtain a majority for a measure or a resolution, but unless the Government and the Imperial Chancellor at the end endorse it, his victory is barren. There are resolutions which have been passed by the Reichstag session after session, each time with a substantial majority, yet they never get farther than a formal record in the parliamentary proceedings, and the time and energy which have been needed to bring them there have been wasted. Such, for example, is a resolution on the subject of payment of members. This practice is general in the Ger-

man monarchies—in Prussia, in Bavaria, in Saxony, in Wurtemberg—as well as in some of the smaller States, as Baden and Hesse, but the imperial constitution contains a provision expressly forbidding it ; and though the Reichstag has frequently adopted a resolution calling on the Government to cancel this prohibition, the appeal has been consistently ignored. Prince Bismarck did, indeed, concede to the deputies free railway passes for the duration of each session, and a week before and a week after, but this was as far as he would go, and his successors in the Chancellorship have proved equally unyielding.

In the State Diets popular power is subject to still greater checks. There the governing factors are three, the Sovereign, the House of Lords, and the House of Deputies. As in the case of the Imperial Reichstag, the Ministers of State are chosen by the Crown, and owe responsibility to it alone. The Upper House is also, as a rule, the compliant creature of the Government, and it can always be relied on in an emergency to repel any aggressive movement from below. When it is added that the Chamber of Deputies is elected on oligarchic principles, applied in such a fashion that large masses of the population have no representation whatever, it will easily be understood that such a thing as popular government, even in a moderate sense, is at present inconceivable in Germany.

It is only during parliamentary elections that anything approaching political excitement occurs, and even then the precautions enacted by the Legislature, and the additional measures enforced by the police authorities have the effect of restricting this dangerous mental condition to the utmost. Nominally, political utterance may enjoy free vent at such times, and if the law were equally observed, the universal right of public meeting and discussion would be undisputed, but in practice it is not so. Even in the large towns a large measure of police control is exercised; frequently obstacles are carefully thrown in the way of popular assemblies; and the agents of law and order always reserve the right of dismissing such gatherings as the last resort should their delicate sense of political propriety be offended.

In rural districts free action is still more difficult. "My people and I," said Frederick the Great once, "have come to the mutually satisfactory understanding that they are to *say* what they please, and I am to *do* what I please." Other times, other manners. Germany has since then come into the possession of a host of constitutions, each intended to curb the power of the Crown in favour of the people; yet if the people's power to act for themselves has increased, free speech, as Englishmen know it, is still far from being enjoyed. Yet the relaxation

at election times of the normal condition of restraint, slight though it is, is a welcome relief to the democratic parties. As soon as the day of election is officially announced—for a uniform day is observed throughout the Empire, an excellent arrangement which England would do well to copy—the newspapers of these parties jubilantly bid their readers bear in mind that "From to-day until the day of polling the consent of the police is no longer essential to the circulation of electioneering prints in the streets and other public places," for at other times no such agitation is permitted. A week or two later come the elections, and, in reality, nothing could be tamer, whether those to the State Diets, or those to the Imperial Diet. The former bodies are not only elected on a narrow franchise, but election is indirect.

How this cumbersome piece of machinery works is as follows. As a preliminary measure, the primary electors (*Urwähler*) choose by open voting a number of electors proper (*Wahlmänner*), and the actual choice of candidates is made by these, who likewise vote openly. Where, as in Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, and other States, the exercise of the franchise is made dependent upon the payment of a certain amount of direct taxation, large sections of the community are debarred from any immediate interest in the elections, and the voting power of the qualified

electors is very unequal. In Prussia the taxpayers are divided into three sections, and are so classified as to represent equal amounts of taxation. The first section is composed of electors who pay the highest taxes to the amount of one-third of the whole sum ; the next section is made up of that number of taxpayers whose aggregate payments make up a second third of the whole; and the third section comprises the smallest taxpayers, and they constitute the great majority. These primary electors choose the electors proper in the proportion of one to every two hundred and fifty taxpayers in each section. The preliminary elections are dreary formalities. Though the purpose is strictly political, no meetings may be held, nor may there be any public discussion of the merits or claims of the secondary electors for whom votes are to be cast. The name of the elector is called out, and unless he is present at the moment he forfeits his vote. If present, he is required to write his name in the poll-book against the candidates whom he desires to support. To make the system — confused and confusing in its very nature — more anomalous still, the distribution of seats in Prussia is based on the census of 1858 in the old provinces, and on that of 1867 in the newer. The result is that a strange medley of under- and over-misrepresentation exists. Berlin, for example, should, according to population, have

twenty-three seats in the Diet, but it has only nine.

Nevertheless, it is not suggested that the system of government in vogue works badly so far as its legislative results go. One might go further and say that to transplant to German soil the English parliamentary *régime,* with the almost unlimited party power which it has developed, would be unequivocally disastrous. Germany's loss is rather that its legislative and electoral arrangements do not induce the best of its citizens to take an active part in public life ; that they do not offer to these the bracing intellectual stimulus which is afforded in countries where parliaments are something more than figure-heads ; and that they deprive the nation generally of one most important part of the education and discipline of life. The result of these various discouragements to serious participation in the elections is that a majority of the enfranchised do not take the trouble to vote. While in the elections to the Reichstag some seventy-five per cent. of the whole go to the poll, in the Prussian elections not more than thirty per cent. can be persuaded to exercise this right, and in the rural districts the proportion often falls as low as ten per cent. Not only so, but there is a strong body of intensely retrogressive political opinion bitterly opposed to any popularising of the existing parliamentary institutions. It is

found in those same parties — the Conservative and the Ultramontane — which quite recently voted in the Reichstag for the taxing of sea passengers' tickets, on the ground (as the Clerical leader said) that "nowadays people travel too much ; it would be better if they stayed at home." Hence, when a year ago the Imperial Government undertook to repeal certain antiquated legislation which prevented the combination of political and other societies, it was against the furious protests of the reactionary parties, which deplored the contemplated act as a dangerous concession to dangerous modern tendencies. It is not long since a well-known Government official published a pamphlet flatly advocating the temporary disbanding of the Reichstag, the suspension of those portions of the constitution which relate to it, and the establishment of an out-and-out dictatorship.

"It is only a dictatorship," he wrote, "that can direct the healthy elements in the State into the right path. Let men out of every class of the population, and of every professional position, request the Emperor to induce the Federal Council to take the sole legislative power into its hands for three years. It is imaginable that the Federal Council might demand this authority from the Imperial Diet, which, in case of refusal, would simply be dissolved. The dictatorship, toned down in accordance with the nature of

the German Empire by being conferred upon the members of the Federation, is inexorably required at the present moment."

When it is added that these words are not those of a political novice, but express the mature opinions of a man whose whole career has been passed in the very heart of political life, their weight and significance can be judged. I have known educated men in private life who have seriously advocated the same return to unrestricted autocracy. "What do we want with a Parliament?" said one to me. "Our Government knows what is good for us. I do not wish to vote; all I care for is to be told what taxes I must pay, and then to be left alone." Yet the speaker knew England well, and had lived for years in the United States. This is, I grant, an extreme form of educated obscurantism; though rare it is certainly not in two, at any rate, of the great national parties.

The German voter has a greater toleration and respect than the English for the carpet-bag politician. The candidates who seek the Conservative vote and interest, for the most part in the "county" or rural constituencies, are in the majority of cases local magnates—sub-prefects (*Landräthe*), large landowners, and the like. The Liberal and Social Democratic parties, however, are compelled to rely very largely upon champions who combine politics with the

pursuit of a profession,— principally the law and journalism,—and not a few of the parliamentary representatives of these parties have no direct interest whatever, either by residence or position, with their constituencies, but live and work in the metropolis. A late Reichstag contained no fewer than one hundred and forty-five landed proprietors and farmers,— most of the latter belonging to the newly formed Farmers' Alliance,— one hundred and ten members of the legal profession, forty authors and journalists (chiefly the latter), twenty clergymen (largely Catholic), eighteen provincial mayors, and, amongst the rank and file, one chimney-sweep.

One peculiarity of the elections to the Imperial Diet which has attracted attention in England at various times is the institution of the second ballot. The constitution requires that to the due election of a candidate he shall obtain an absolute majority of all the votes recorded. Where the candidates are three or more in number, and none of them secures the requisite majority of more than one-half the aggregate poll, the two candidates who stand highest must poll again within the next fourteen days on exactly the same register of electors. Should several candidates be eligible for a second ballot owing to an equality of votes having occurred, choice is made amongst them by drawing lots. In the case of the second ballot, too, an absolute

THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT HOUSE, BERLIN

majority carries the day, but in the event of a tie resulting the decision is by lot.

It is a much-debated question how far useful the second ballot is in Germany as a means for allowing large minorities to obtain a parliamentary voice proportionate to their strength. In the abstract its value appears indisputable, but the question cannot be judged in the abstract, and no degree of theoretical perfection will outweigh defect and failure in practice should they prove to be the verdict of experience. That the second ballot is but a poor makeshift as an attempt at proportional representation is best shown by its actual working, though, on the other hand, it may be objected that Germany is not a fair field for an experiment of this kind, because of its multiplicity of parties and the strained relationship which exists between most of them. Disregarding several small groups, no fewer than ten recognised parties have been represented in the Imperial Diet for the past generation, and, counting every named group, there are seventeen divisions to-day, while, in the interval, six have disappeared, or have been absorbed in other groups. Some of these parties are able to work together under normal circumstances,—for example, the Conservatives with the Imperial party, and as a rule with the National Liberals; the Radical Union with the Radical People's party, and occasionally with

the National Liberals,—but, in general, opposition is characterised by decided antipathies, and not infrequently by quite needless asperity. This unamiable relationship of parties has its natural result. Instances might be quoted from every election where, owing to the absolute uncertainty of natural alliances and straight voting, a constituency gets for its deputy not the candidate who represents the strongest homogeneous party, but the one who is able to bring about the most unlikely combination of votes. Such results do not necessarily discredit the second ballot on general principles, but they do show that the peculiar case of Germany proves it to be no counsel of perfection, and affords no assurance that by its operation anything more than the roughest justice will be meted to the contesting parties.

CHAPTER XII

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

IN a country of so many territorial divisions as Germany it is inevitable that uniformity in local government must not be expected. Indeed, it was only at the beginning of the past year that a universal code of imperial civil law came into operation, and that thus the last important link of Empire — if we overlook the special position allowed to Bavaria and Wurtemberg in military and postal matters — was forged. For a quarter of a century a commission of experts was engaged in reducing to order the bewildering maze of conflicting laws which was one of the accumulated anomalies of State disunity. The judicial systems which were in full force up to 1871 were not even German in origin. In some States there was a strong national element, but in general foreign influence preponderated. The legal fiction which regarded the "Roman Empire of the German Nation" as the lineal descendant of the

ancient Roman Empire, and the German Empire therefore as perpetuating the Roman-Imperial tradition, accounts for the widespread influence of Roman law. On the other hand, in those portions of the Empire which had been under French influence or absolute domination — as on the Rhine, in Baden, and in Alsace-Lorraine — the Code Napoleon still held good ; and confusion was aggravated by the permeation of these systems of law by German elements. The Empire had not long been established before the criminal law and judicial procedure were made uniform throughout the country, and now that the same has been done with the civil law the last remnant of judicial chaos has disappeared, and throughout Germany the principle applies at last without reservation, — one citizenship, one law.

But while the laws which affect Germans in their capacity as citizens of the Empire— that is, the laws bearing on their political and civil status—have been made identical, the laws which regulate their municipal and local life continue as before to be the province of the individual States, and for the majority of men and women it is these laws which are of most consequence, since they affect most deeply, or at least most visibly, their common interests and welfare. In the towns the system of government does not differ greatly in principle from

the English, though there are certain important deviations in matter of detail. One is the absence of that extreme multiplicity of public authorities, each specially elected for a distinct purpose, which has grown up in England. The Germans have their Poor-law and School Boards, but they are otherwise named and created than in England, being, in fact, mere departments of the central administrative Council of the town. In this way multiplicity of election, conflict of authority, and plurality of rating powers are obviated. For the discharge of poor-law functions the services of inhabitants other than Town Councillors are generally invited, and the law requires compliance with such calls to public duty under penalty, save in certain exceptional and clearly defined circumstances.

The Prussian Town Council differs from the English in two very important points. Alongside the elected body there exists a more or less permanent committee, whose functions are executive,— the *Magistrat.* As in England, it is the Council's duty to pass resolutions, and in general to decide what shall or shall not be done ; but it falls to the *Magistrat* to initiate most proposals, and to carry out all the behests of the elected Assembly. This executive is composed as a rule of the Mayor, a certain number of paid officials, who preside over special departments of municipal life, —as education,

sanitation, the poor law, etc.,—and other honorary members. It may be a question whether we shall not have to come to some contrivance of the same kind, owing to the steady multiplication of the duties of Town Councils in these days of municipal enterprise, and the example is at least worth bearing in mind. Not the wisest of Town Councillors can know everything, nor the most public-spirited have time for everything ; and now that municipalities are setting up as traders in so many directions—as in the supply of water, gas, electric light, electric power, tramways, workmen's dwellings and lodging-houses, abattoirs, and even sterilised milk—administrative efficiency may quite conceivably require the larger Corporations to call in the services of similar bodies of experts, who shall give to the management of public undertakings the careful supervision they need. The German Mayor has not an exact equivalent in England. He is a paid official, and is chosen by his Council for a term of years. His functions are both presidential and legal, and he may be said to combine the positions of both the English Mayor and Town Clerk. As a rule, therefore, he is a trained lawyer, thoroughly versed in the theory and practice of local government, and the importance and emoluments of the office cause it to be greatly valued.

In general, very commendable readiness is

shown to accept and even to seek municipal office, even though the highest civic position, for the reason explained, is not open to ambition. Not only so, but remarkable enterprise is thrown into local government, and many of the larger German towns have much to teach other countries in this respect, even if they can also learn from them in turn. Capitals are not always models of administration ; but it may be questioned whether on the whole there is a better governed city in the world than Berlin. The sanitary arrangements are exemplary of their kind. The sewage system is as perfect, alike in principle and machinery, as scientific knowledge and unsparing expense can make it. The drainage of the vast administrative area is conveyed by an elaborate "canalisation" system to an extensive farm some miles away, where it is utilised in irrigation. It is interesting to note, too, that this irrigation farm serves a double purpose, inasmuch as the labour employed upon it is obtained from the adjacent Rummelsburg Workhouse, to which certain classes of Berlin's criminal and otherwise vicious population are despatched. The poorest of the poor are required at least to keep their dwellings clean, and in default the sanitary authorities summarily enter into temporary occupation, and do it for them, meanwhile sending the occupants to lodgings elsewhere. The calamity

which befell Hamburg in the cholera epidemic of 1892, which took that city by surprise, and for a time paralysed its entire system of health control, has somewhat prejudiced Germany's reputation for public sanitation ; but the way in which the public health authorities of Berlin met the pest and conquered it spoke volumes for their preparedness and organising capacity. Though connected with Hamburg by a line of railway over which thousands of persons travelled each day, few cases were imported into Berlin over which the Sanitary Board had any control whatever, and the cholera fiend altogether failed to get a hold in the city. Railway passengers from the infected seaport were detained at the Berlin terminus and examined, and the suspicious of them were promptly bathed and their clothes stoved, before they were allowed to pass into the street. The most admirable arrangements were made for isolating every case which occurred, while an effectual system of quarantine and examination—whose grasp nobody could elude—was established, and so one of the most vulnerable towns in Germany, geographically speaking, was protected against an unspeakable disaster.

In Berlin, too, the public convenience in regard to transit is consulted in every possible way. The streets are excellently made and faultlessly maintained, thanks to the existence of

a perfect army of scavengers, who haunt the thoroughfares day and night. To mention one matter only, the arrangements for the removal of snow in winter might be the envy of many an English town. Snow may fall the night through, yet in the morning little trace will be visible ; and the fact that the corporation of the city pays as much as £35,000 in one winter for the removal of snow will attest the importance that is attached to facility of traffic and locomotion. A thorough system of tramway communication exists, under the careful oversight of the police authority, which similarly regulates the number, character, movements, and fares of every *droschky* which plies within the city boundaries. The fire brigade of Berlin is too highly esteemed abroad to call for special mention. The postal arrangements, too, are in every way admirable. A post-box is found at almost every street corner, and nowhere is it necessary to walk more than a couple of minutes before finding a post-office, and while the telegraph service is both efficient and cheap, a pneumatic post for the speedy despatch of small letters has for many years proved a great boon to the inhabitants. Added to this, the State permits, both in Berlin and elsewhere, the operation of a city post,—a private enterprise, which receives and delivers letters and small consignments, within the municipal boundaries only,

at a much lower charge than the imperial post.

The welfare of the working classes is promoted by a number of municipal institutions which would be well worthy of special treatment were this the proper place. Under the care of the Town Council an efficient system of labour bureaux is maintained, and work-seekers are allowed to register themselves without fee ; while during the severe winter months, manual employment is offered to *bona-fide* working-men who are without means of subsistence. Free night shelters are also kept open for the homeless at the public expense. In public parks Berlin is not particularly rich considering its size ; but the reason is that in the Thiergarten it possesses a noble wood of great dimensions within easy access, and that this is so excellently laid out and maintained, that it virtually serves as the breathing-place of the entire city. The suburban railways also offer every facility for reaching the attractive forests which surround the metropolis. Nevertheless, the industrial quarters all have their own little parks and playgrounds ; in busy centres disused graveyards, suitably planted and seated, are also thrown open to the public ; and the municipal authorities have turned many of the wide thoroughfares into avenues, which are not only beautiful in themselves, but in summer offer welcome shade

against the tropical sun which beats upon the sandy Mark of Brandenburg. In fine, Berlin is a bright example, and one that will bear careful study by English municipalities, of what can be done for the public health, convenience, and welfare where intelligence and enterprise go hand in hand.

In provincial government a very different organisation prevails. The system is highly complex and efficient enough as a system, but it allows much less scope for civic activity than is enjoyed in the towns. Here, especially, we are confronted with that State officialism which plays so large a part in German public life, and in noticing it the political aspect of the question cannot be overlooked. Taking Prussia still, as the best example available, the first administrative division of the country is seen to be into provinces, the heads of which are the Chief Presidents, paid officials appointed by the Crown, and to it alone responsible. These Chief Presidents exercise a general supervision over the administrative authorities of their provinces, and their powers of control are very large. The province is divided into Government Districts (or High Bailiwicks, as they are called in Hanover). At the head of each is the Government President, answering to the French Prefect. Below the Districts come the Circuits (the equivalent of the French *arrondissement*),

at the head of each of which is the *Landrath*, or Sub-prefect. The Circuit, which is the administrative unit, may be either (1) urban, where a town forms a separate Circuit for self-government purposes, or (2) rural, where various parishes or manors, or both, are united to form a Circuit. Rural Circuits are further divided for police purposes into petty sessional divisions or hundreds, each with an unpaid superintendent. For each of these administrative divisions there is a corresponding assembly. The province has first its Diet, which meets periodically for the transaction of purely provincial affairs, and is convened and dismissed by royal decree. For the management of current provincial business there is a Standing Committee, consisting of the Landes-director and a variable number of elected provincial deputies, all of whom are nominated by the Diet. Communication between the Diet and the Government is carried on through the Chief President of the province, who watches the doings of the Diet on the Government's behalf. Again, the Government District has its separate administration, with departments for internal affairs, church and school, domains, forests, and taxes, and the Chief President is, as a rule, its head. Finally, the Circuits have their Diets, elected by the towns, the rural parishes, and the large landowners, and presided over by the *Landräthe*.

It must not be imagined, however, that this system of local government, though containing so strong an elective element, gives to the people the freedom of action which is possessed in England. On the contrary, Government and bureaucratic influence makes itself very powerfully felt in every direction. Before the representative authorities are allotted their duties, State officials, as well as the police, have reserved for themselves many of the most important powers and functions of civil government. The President of the Province, indeed, has an almost unlimited power of veto, which, on occasion, he exercises in the smallest as well as the largest matters. For example, a year or two ago the Municipal Council of Berlin decided by formal vote to send a wreath to the famous little cemetery of Friedrichshain, in which the victims of the March Revolution of 1848 are buried. That event, correctly or not, has always been regarded by the popular parties of Prussia as marking, and, indeed, creating, the era of constitutional government; and considering the part played in it by the King of Prussia of that day, it would be idle to view it as a piece of mere political incendiarism. In England a statue can be erected in the very precincts of Parliament in token that Lord Protector Cromwell occupies a recognised place in English history, and the Crown is too sensible because too stable to take offence.

The sentimental act of the Berlin Council was promptly prohibited by the terror-stricken President of the Province of Brandenburg, and it had, of course, to be abandoned. In England no power exists which could have maintained such a prohibition, and did it exist one can hardly imagine the veto being exercised. Yet it would be wrong to suppose that, either in town or country, any great dissatisfaction with the existing state of things prevails. The citizens bear the bureaucratic yoke patiently, even where it sits most heavily upon them, and console themselves with the reflection that, if everything is not done as well as it might be, the fault is not theirs.

But, though civil government may not suffer, great harm is done all the same by the stifling of public spirit. No one can live long in Germany without being struck by the effects upon the national character of patriarchal and bureaucratic rule. These effects are manifold, and are observable on every hand. Just as the military system has produced a people wonderfully amenable to order and discipline, so the bureaucratic system of government has created a spirit of meek forbearance and unmanly dependence in civil life; the one result is excellent, the other in every way harmful. Hence come the absence of that vigorous public life which one is accustomed to find in countries of free institutions

and a large indifference towards national and local affairs equally. And though, as has been said, many cities and towns are conspicuous for enlightened administration, it is generally where party feeling happens to be acute, and where Radicals and Socialists range themselves on the side of progress and enterprise in opposition to the Conservative preference for wariness and moderation in all things. The huge system of officialism has the further effect of discouraging the spirit of voluntary service. There are thousands of paid officials in Germany performing duties which in England are done as well by the people themselves, through elected bodies, or by private citizens, whose only reward is the respect of their neighbours. That is an evil in itself, but it produces another evil, which is that the spirit of emulation in public work is deadened. It is significant that in some States free citizens are by law compelled, if required, to discharge certain honorary duties in local administration—generally in connexion with the poor law—for three years at a time, unless incapacitated or disqualified. The paralysing effects of State patronage are seen in other directions. The prevailing idea being that the State is responsible for everybody's welfare, and that what the State does not do cannot profitably be done at all, it is not strange that citizens should rarely come forward with large liberality in support of public

institutions and philanthropies of which there may be pressing need. The people have not been trained to these things, and it might almost seem that private concern for the general welfare is hardly desired. The hospitals, the orphanages, the almshouses, the universities, the schools, the libraries, even the churches are, as a rule, built, and also maintained, by the State and the parochial authorities and not by private munificence.

There are, of course, other disadvantages, and one is the undue deference which the public is compelled to pay to bumbledom. The German has a marvellous respect for what is "official," and officialism is to him a sort of second providence. I remember reading in a January issue of a leading journal the grave editorial announcement: "The first fortnight of the new year lies behind us. Thus one twenty-sixth part of the year has *officially* passed down the stream of time." It was the editor's unconscious homage to the peaked hat. But the bureaucrat has a way of riding the high horse which at times exhausts the patience even of the patient civilian. The superior classes of State servants form a caste as exclusive as do the officers of the army themselves, but it is the small officials, the inflated Jacks-in-office, who are always and everywhere the most pretentious; and in general no love is lost between the public and these, its nominal servants. There is a disposition on the

part of the latter to forget their true position, and, because directly responsible to departmental superiors, to overlook the fact that their supreme master is no other than the much-abused, much-suffering, common man who pays the taxes and bears the State upon his shoulders.

A case came to my knowledge where an Englishman, newly come to a town in Prussia, served an energetic protest upon the taxing authorities for having so promptly notified him of his income taxation schedule, which was too high, and called for payment accordingly. They answered by raising him to a higher schedule. He protested again, and with greater emphasis. The result was that he found himself another notch up on the fiscal tally. On this, like a sensible Englishman, he paid his tax—now unquestionably very excessive — without further demur. Since then the English system of self-declaration has been introduced in Prussia in connexion with this tax, and the innovation offered officialdom a unique opportunity for distinguishing itself. For the first two years the surveyors of taxes, acting on the genial assumption that all, or nearly all, men are liars, made it a rule to dispute the majority of the declarations. Discontent on the taxpayers' part led to further suspicion on the part of the taxing authority, which in any measuring of forces naturally had the better of the encounter. Questions such as

these were of common occurrence: "How much do you spend on holidays?" "How much goes in parties?" "What do you give away in presents?" "How much do you give your wife for pocket-money?" The English plan of the three years' average was adopted, and with all the English impartiality. Thus a bank clerk was gravely admonished: "Did you receive any special gift on the occasion of your jubilee of service? if so, it must be calculated on the basis of a three year's average." Another person in the same position who was known to take his luncheon on the premises was asked to declare, as a separate source of income, the amount allowed by his employers for the mid-day meal. These oddities were all related to the Prussian Lower House by indignant deputies. Yet if he is overbearing and wooden-headed at times, the public official is invariably faithful and conscientious. His fondness for detail is merely a part of the German spirit of thoroughness, and his pedantry but another phase of that unpracticalness of character which is so often found amongst a nation of scholars. For devotion to duty and efficiency, no civil service in the world stands higher than that of Germany.

The worst feature of State officialism in provincial administration is that every functionary, whether of Province, District, or Circuit, must be a Government man, who is expected to think

with Government mind, hear with Government ears, and speak with Government lips. One has only to imagine, say, the Chairmen of English County Councils subject to the same influence and restraint, in order to understand how diametrically different has been the development of provincial government in the two countries. So firmly laid down is the unwritten law requiring provincial administrative officials to devote themselves undividedly to the Government, that quite recently a number of *Landräthe* were summarily removed from office and put on half-pay for having voted against a Ministerial measure in the Prussian Upper House. The attempt was made by the party to which the displaced officials belonged to prove that the Government's retaliatory act was an infraction of the constitution, one of the provisions of which stipulates that "The members of both Chambers are representatives of the whole nation ; they vote according to their free and independent convictions, and report subject to directions and instructions. They can never be called to account for the votes they give in the Chamber ; for the opinions they express there they can only be called to account inside the Chamber itself in accordance with the standing orders." But the *Landrath* cannot claim to be an independent deputy. He is in the service of the Government, which both appoints and pays him, and by the terms of his

engagement, as tacitly understood, if not actually expressed, he must have no public interest which can clash with his duty to his employers. Injustice in the treatment of these rebellious officials could hardly be alleged with reason. No doubt the punishment awarded was rigorous ; but rigour is part of the system, and this system the *Landräthe* completely understand, and do not fail to make use of, so far as their own authority goes, in dealing with inferior officials. In general, the discipline to which State servants are subjected in Germany is severe, but the reason is that the Government system itself is rigid and inflexible.

It happens occasionally in England that members of a Government act the part of the candid friend towards their own colleagues, and frankly criticise measures for which they share a collective responsibility. But whatever reflections may be called forth by such mental detachment in the inner circles of Cabinet intercourse, whose secrets were once supposed to be inviolable and sacred, the worst visible consequence is seen in the genial banter of next day's Opposition Press. In Germany Ministerial incompatibilities of this kind are hardly conceivable, but cases have occurred of high State functionaries departing from the rule which requires the absolute sinking of their individuality in the policy of the Government, and the result has been serious to the

offenders. A few years ago a retired Prussian Minister Plenipotentiary, on the pension list, who was also a leading Conservative member of the House of Lords, had the hardihood to contribute to one of the organs of his party in the Berlin daily Press an article criticising adversely the commercial treaties which Count von Caprivi contracted. As the law requires that a State official shall obtain the assent of his superiors before rushing into print, and assent had in this case neither been asked nor obtained, his offence came before the Disciplinary Court which deals with contumelious officials, and he was dismissed the diplomatic service and deprived of his pension.

But if the host of State officials claim a large share in the work of civil government, there is still another repository of administrative power which stands entirely aloof from the public, though controlling public action in many ways. I refer to the police authority, which exercises many functions of government which with us belong of right to representative bodies, as well as legal functions which with us belong to courts of law, and many functions of both kinds which are peculiar to Germany. In the street, especially, the policeman claims an almost undivided sway. The municipal authorities are, of course, responsible for their maintenance in proper condition, and for the observance of all

sanitary measures which are deemed to be essential in this age of germ theories and innumerable bacilli. But it is the supreme police official rather than the ratepayer who keeps these authorities in order, who reminds them of neglected responsibilities, suggests new ones, and, in general, plays the part both of municipal providence and public critic, with the important proviso that he is able to make his advice and censures felt as well as heard. Such a thing as the obstruction of a thoroughfare is not tolerated for a moment in a German town.

The German is nothing if not logical; and so the policeman, being convinced that public streets are intended for traffic, holds it to be contrary to common-sense to allow them to be obstructed, and he acts accordingly. The professional mendicant is not suffered to proclaim his manifold woes into the sympathetic ears of passers-by, nor the mutilated Lazarus to expose his wounds to public gaze. Begging in general is drastically repressed, and though it may furtively be tried in the grocer's or baker's shop, it usually takes the ingenious form of a proposal to exchange an unlimited amount of food for a solitary halfpenny,—which is, of course, the only one the wily purchaser has possessed for the last twenty-four hours. Street peddling is only permitted by licence, and the accompanying conditions must be scrupulously observed. Street

crying must be engaged in warily, or the catchpenny may find himself suddenly marching in the direction of the guard-house. Does it snow? You had better clear your door-front betimes, or the perambulating constable will have something to say to you, and this though you may live in the very Ultima Thule of the municipal area. As it is winter, you probably wish to skate, and you go to the river for the purpose. "Forbidden!" is the legend which greets you on the brink. The ice is still a centimetre too thin, and until to-morrow the Police President will not allow it to be trodden on, for your safety and the mental composure of your relatives are not your affair, but his. The attentions which are paid by the police to incoming strangers are apt to strike the foreigner as superfluous. No sooner does a sojourner arrive at his hotel or private lodging, than word must be sent to the nearest police office, and in the event of the stay exceeding a few days, a ponderous document must be filled up, giving information of various kinds concerning the nationality. home, social position, and business of the stranger, which the police supplement, if they are so disposed, by private inquiries of their own. But though regulations of this kind may seem to be intrusive and impertinent, there is no doubt about their utility. So complete is the surveillance exercised over the inhabitants of a

German town that the name, address, and calling of every adult are kept posted up in detail, with the result that it is possible, at a few moments' notice, to learn the exact whereabouts of any resident.

Work-people of every kind are subjected to still severer control. They are required to keep what are called Labour Books, in which, besides name, age, and occupation, the places and duration of past service, with brief testimonials from employers, are recorded. These books serve to introduce them to new employers, and also for the general purpose of legitimation, when needful. The service-books or cards of domestic servants may even contain full descriptions of their more conspicuous personal characteristics,—the colour and quantity of their hair, their complexion, the condition of their teeth, and so forth. And so it is with a hundred details of civil and private life. The policeman literally besets you behind and before, and has ever his (more or less) benevolent hand upon you. You, as a foreigner, may not like it, but that does not matter ; it is the law, custom, tradition of the country ; and those who have grown up under it no longer protest, but even prefer it so, for life becomes so much easier when the State provides special officials to think and act for you in half the emergencies of daily experience. There is yet in force in a district of North

Germany a police regulation which prohibits the smoking of pipes or cigars in the streets of villages, and not long ago a clergyman was prosecuted for having ignorantly disobeyed it. Doubtless the regulation was issued at a remote date, when the houses were built of wood and straw, and the streets were narrow ; but though the conditions of its origin no longer continue, the decree survives, and, surviving, it must be employed, for let it once be admitted that laws are not meant to be enforced, and what will the policeman do then, poor thing ? It is less surprising that the regulation of public-houses and drinking-places should be very generally left to police orders, and it must be confessed that the police authority, as a rule, exercises its powers in this respect with great discretion. There is no magistrate to interpose between it and the licensees, and repeated illegality often leads to a summariness of treatment which would delight the heart of the English Prohibitionist, for the rule is to administer severe warning for a first offence, and to cancel the licence on repetition. It likewise fixes the times of opening and closing,—the closing hour being, indeed, termed the "police hour,"—decides whether the waiters shall be male or female, and determines hygienic arrangements generally. The regulation of tramways, public vehicles, and lodging-houses is also a police

function. Private householders, too, are liable to police admonitions of a kind which in England are not even expected from the public health authority, and this is especially the case if they happen to interfere with the convenience of their neighbours. The theatres and places of entertainment are under the same control, and in Berlin even the censorship of plays falls to the Police President.

In the domain of morals, indeed, the policeman is apt to magnify his power. Not long ago a Berlin art dealer, holding a royal warrant, was visited by an indignant constable, who pointed reprovingly to prints in the window of a Botticelli "Venus" and Rubens's "Andromeda," the originals of which are in the Berlin Royal Gallery, and, denouncing them as obscene, required their immediate removal. Police outbreaks of prudery of the kind are of periodical occurrence in the metropolis. It was after one of them that a leading journal made the novel proposal that the statues on the Spree Bridge at the bottom of the Linden (irreverently called the Indecent Bridge) should be attired in trousers and petticoats. More recently a curious case occurred at Magdeburg, where, in the interest of religion, the police authorities took upon themselves to revise the modern classical drama. In a play by the famous Holstein playwright, Friedrich Hebbel, the words, "Karl, don't drink so much;

the father says that the devil is in the wine," are put into the mouth of one of the characters, and the answer comes, "But the priests say that God is in the wine. We shall see who is right." The play is an old one, but the repute of Hebbel and his writings had evidently not come to the knowledge of the intelligent policeman who happened to be on theatre duty at the time, for the actor who spoke Karl's reply was summoned to answer a charge of "improperly using the name of the Deity, and of interpolating words of his own which the author could never have employed." Not until textual proof had been advanced that Hebbel really wrote the drama as it was played, was the Court satisfied that an act of profanity could not safely be imputed. As Hebbel had so written, it was all right; had the words been added by a later hand, it would have been an indictable act of blasphemy.

But it is in the control of political and public meetings that the police power asserts itself most arbitrarily. The German laws on the subject of public assembly and industrial combination have placed a large measure of authority in the hands of the police, as the politician and the working-man both know to their cost. Save in election times, when complete liberty of agitation, according to the constitution, ought to be enjoyed, there is no pretence of genuine liberty

of speech. When it is desired to hold a public meeting, the sanction of the police must first be obtained; and in order to this, the character and purpose of the meeting must be distinctly defined. Should the proceedings appear to the police official in attendance to depart from the lines laid down, he may at discretion bring the meeting to a close at once. At a political meeting held not long ago in a Saxon town — and Saxony is not as police-ridden as Prussia — to consider a Military Bill then before the country, the speaker (he was a Social-Democratic Deputy) happened in the course of his harangue to appeal to the working-men present to organise themselves in trade-unions, in the interest of industrial solidarity. As this subject had nothing to do with the Army Bill, the police official present promptly declared the meeting to be dissolved, as "the speaker's remarks were not pertinent to the order of the day." It has even happened that a political meeting has been dissolved owing to the too boisterous laughter in which it dared to indulge. In general, political agitation is discouraged, and, where possible, repressed by the police ; and the fining and imprisonment of daring members of the popular parties, for such offences as "soliciting subscriptions without police permission," "making a speech at a grave-side without having announced the intention so to do," "distributing

hand-bills," and the like, are of the commonest occurrence both in town and country. But it is not merely political meetings that are thus under police ban. In a provincial town the election of a new Mayor was pending. Two members of the Town Council invited some of their colleagues to a private conference on the subject, and a restaurant was named as a convenient place of assembly. The conference did not take place, however, though several of the Councillors chatted over the coming event in the general guest-chamber. But the police had heard of the intention to hold this dangerous gathering, for which permission had not been sought, and a constable was despatched to watch. Seeing several known Town Councillors seated round a table, he walked up to them, and formally declaring their "meeting" dissolved, he bade them go home. That was not all, for the two Councillors who summoned a conference which did not take place were prosecuted and fined,—it would puzzle the shrewdest judge to say why. In another provincial town a local politician gave notice to the police of his wish to hold and address a meeting to consider public questions. Permission was refused by the Police Superintendent on the grounds that (1) "Your person is entirely unknown ; (2) the order of the day is quite indefinite ; and (3) the meeting would not be over by nine o'clock."

In reality each of these reasons, given the legitimacy of the meeting in itself, was fictitious,—an arbitrary abuse of the law by the police authority, against which there was no appeal. And how far the law may be abused with impunity was illustrated not long ago by a singular incident which occurred at Kiel. During an election there two Socialists were arrested by a gendarme for circulating electioneering literature, — a proceeding perfectly legal at such a time,—and when complaint was made to his superior and recompense demanded, according to the law of the land, for wrongful imprisonment, the reply was given that the gendarme's act was quite proper, since he had not heard that the election had begun. Such a decision recalls Kant's well-known dictum, "When justice ceases to be done men live no longer to any purpose."

So, too, work-people cannot meet for the purely personal object of considering their wages and conditions of employment without the prior permission of the police, which will not necessarily be given, and should a meeting of Poles be held to discuss matters of interest to them, the constable present has a right to require the use of German, so that he may follow what is said, though not one in fifty of those present may know any but their native language. The law of assembly, and still more the mode in which

it is enforced, might, indeed, have the deliberate purpose of discouraging public meetings of all kinds, and so of preventing the growth of healthy public opinion. What misguided endeavours of this kind lead to has been shown by the abject failure of the old coercive measures against Social Democracy, which never spread so rapidly as when most repressed and forced into secret and subterranean methods of agitation.

An important factor in the police service of Berlin and other large towns is the secret detective. Over Berlin especially the secret police system spreads like a net, and though natural exaggeration probably prevails as to the omnipresence of its mysterious agents, there is no doubt about the effectual oversight which they are able at command to exercise upon the public life and movements of the population. Every day a host of these emissaries of the law assemble at the police headquarters to receive orders. Very burgher-like persons indeed they are as a rule, attired faultlessly, according to the latest ideas of the man-milliner ; some might even pass unsuspected in the politest circles of society. They are employed for all sorts of purposes, though naturally the detection of the more secret forms of crime is their principal mission. Wherever great concourses of people assemble out-of-doors, and the vigilance of the uniformed constables is likely to be overtaxed, a contingent

of secret criminal officers is sent to mix in the crowds, there to observe, hear, and act where necessary. The regular policeman passes and repasses these well-drilled spies, yet, though he knows them as his own kindred, no word or look of recognition is exchanged. In these days of "political attempts," when every Crown is more or less beset by unseen danger from the enemies of legality and order, the visit of a royal personage to Berlin brings into activity all the skill and cunning of which the criminal police department is capable. No one knows it save as a theoretical certainty, yet in every crowd that lines a royal progress, or gazes into the privacy of a royal palace, move to and fro these secret, argus-eyed guardians of order. That, however, is high life, indeed, compared with some of the secret detective's functions. He may another day be commissioned to unravel some mystery in which the baser elements are concerned. Then, suitably attiring himself, he will seek the haunts of crime, and therein will consort as though himself belonging to the powers of darkness, passing from low drinking-house to lower gambling den, entering into the dissipations of their *habitués*, saying no more than he need, and making himself as inconspicuous as he may, yet for ever watching, listening, ferreting, and gathering the toils of justice round unsuspecting plotters against society. But the

sans-culotte and leveller of to-day may to-morrow be an up-to-date dandy, dining in the best restaurant of the city, surreptitiously seeking traces of some fast-living sharper who is known to be pursuing mischievous ends. So it is that the secret policeman in his time plays many parts. It is an exciting life, offering keen attractions to those who follow it for its romantic possibilities, though not without a dangerous side.

While, however, the ends of justice are doubtless served by this system, there are counterbalancing disadvantages, of which the principal is that it is carried to lengths which would certainly not be tolerated in a free country. I remember being one day seated in a Berlin drawing-room overlooking the street, when my host suddenly interrupted the lively political conversation, and hastening to the window, closed it with a nervous gesture. Asked to explain, he answered simply: "The police are everywhere and hear everything." His apprehension was, of course, foolish and groundless, but it was significant as an evidence of the all-prevalent idea that the police exist to get people into trouble, and, hence, are always on the look-out for victims. Even an illusion has its cause and explanation, and the reason for this exaggerated fear of police intrusion must be sought in the unfortunate position which the police system,

and the policeman as its representative, occupy in the civic life of Germany. Police and public have only one thing in common,— mutual dislike ; and it would be difficult to say on which side the antipathy is the stronger. As the policeman is under no sort of public control, — for the municipalities are not permitted to concern themselves with the protection of public peace and order,— he is apt to be arbitrary and masterful in behaviour, and to rule the street as a sergeant rules the drill-ground. The public may be, as a famous man has said, an ass ; but even asses, so far as is known, do not like to be eternally cuffed and kicked. Hence the cavalier treatment which the public too often receives from the many-buttoned officer of justice engenders on its part a natural resentment and mistrust, and two eminently useful persons, who have every reason in the world for reciprocal respect, the law-keeper and the law-defender, never succeed in winning each other's confidence.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NEWSPAPER AND ITS READERS

THE newspaper Press, in general, takes its character from the public to which it appeals and the public life whose movements it is intended to reflect ; and, taking newspapers and newspaper readers in the mass, every country probably has just the Press which it deserves. In Germany we are confronted with several important facts which, as they were bound to do, have powerfully acted upon the popular literature of the day and week. It has been shown that political life is narrow, that public opinion carries comparatively little weight in the ruling circles, and that personal liberty is severely restricted. The results upon the newspapers could hardly have been other than they are : a restricted influence, lack of status, and harassing difficulties at the hands of both the law and the police. That the Press has very little influence on the Government will readily be understood, but it fails also to form and direct public opinion to any large

degree. There is not one journal in Germany which, in either circulation or influence, can be named in the same breath with the least of ten or a dozen of London's principal daily newspapers; and outside the capital the best of Berlin's journals only circulate in isolated numbers, and in the south hardly at all. It is the misfortune of the German Press that the special laws for the regulation of newspapers and serial publications date from times of great political unrest and agitation. Hence it is perhaps inevitable that restrictive and regulative measures no longer in harmony with the ideas and necessities of the present age should have been preserved. Liberty of the Press has been one of the leading political watchwords of the reform party during the last three-quarters of a century, yet the battles won in this domain of national freedom have hitherto been of the slightest importance. The Press does not, it is true, stand where it stood at the beginning of the century, when even visiting-cards could not be printed without the solemn assent of the public censor, and when political prints which annoyed the Government were summarily suppressed at the mere beck of a Minister or his subordinate. Yet little ground has been won since the harsher features of the measures passed fifty years ago for the repression of democratic excesses were abandoned.

The legislation passed soon after the establishment of the Empire (that of 1874) did, indeed, concede, in principle at least, the "freedom of the Press," and it abandoned a formal censorship ; but an aggravating form of control is still exercised by the police, whose authority over the Press is greater in reality than it seems to be from the letter of the statute. It is no longer necessary, as it once was, to obtain sanction for the issue of each number before it is sent into the world, but it is still the legal duty of a publisher to lay a copy of his journal, directly it reaches the press, before the police authority, which acknowledges its receipt by a formal sealed certificate, bearing the number of the issue and the day and even the hour of delivery. This copy an informal censor revises ; and in the event of any article being objectionable he may order the immediate confiscation of the whole issue, or a court of law, which in such matters works with wondrous speed, may do so for him. As the police and judicial authorities have wide discretion in the determination of editorial culpability, this power of confiscation is felt to be a harsh one. This incident occurred a year or two ago in Berlin. The leading Liberal newspaper, the *Vossische Zeitung*, a journal of eminent respectability, had published an article, moderate in spirit and terms, on "Governmental bureaucracy." The Prussian

Minister of Justice sent two police commissaries to the newspaper office to inquire the authorship. The editor declined to divulge his contributor's name, on which the commissaries called in a number of police constables and ordered them to ransack the editorial rooms, and even the printing office, in search for the manuscript, which, of course, was not found. Here is an illustration of the same thing elsewhere: "Yesterday afternoon three police officers made a fruitless search in the offices of the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* at the instance of the Hamburg Court, for the manuscript of an article concerning the North German Bank." Only last year the responsible editor of a Socialist journal in the provinces was prosecuted for having republished from a foreign newspaper an article held to reflect improperly on the Emperor. The editor advanced proof that the article appeared without his knowledge, and while he was absent from duty. Moreover, the acting editor voluntarily came forward and confessed that he had published the article on his own responsibility. The latter was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for his pains, but his chief was given four years' imprisonment as well.

While the Socialist Law existed, the powers of the police were far more extensive than now, and the rigour with which they were used was shown in the wholesale extermination of news-

papers of Socialistic tendencies which took place between the years 1878 and 1890. Since that law disappeared Socialist journals have sprung up again in abundance, though the experience gained by their conductors during the era of repression does not enable them to steer clear of friction with the authorities. Fear of the law is, in fact, the one great plague of the German editor's life. For it is the editor, and not the publisher, who first comes in for punishment when the newspapers transgress the Press laws, though theoretically not only publisher, editor, and news-agent, but also the compositors and machinists of a printing office are equally indictable when the newspaper has done wrong. So frequent are prosecutions of editors that many newspapers are compelled to maintain on their staffs what are known as "sitting-editors," whose special function it is to serve in prison (colloquially *sitzen* or "sit") the terms of detention that may be awarded for a too liberal exercise of the critical faculty.

One of the oddest judgments passed under the Press Law—one, by the way, for which there was no possible legal justification — emanated quite recently from a Magdeburg court. An editor was convicted of a certain offence, and the appeal made for leniency, on the ground that it was his first prosecution, was rejected, because "the newspaper which he conducted

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had frequently been punished before." Of course, in strict law, newspapers as such are not punishable, and are not recognised as "criminal personalities"; but the judgment virtually set up this strange theory, and had the effect of making an editor responsible for the shortcomings of all his predecessors in office, and of applying to journalism the doctrine of hereditary sin. The police, too, regulate the public sale of newspapers, and decide whether they shall be cried in the streets or not, and in Berlin special editions cannot be published without the prior sanction of this authority. In the matter of false news the German courts of law have a short way with the catch-penny newspaper which is at least deserving of consideration in other countries. Should a newspaper publish news of the kind, its publisher, editor, and everybody connected with its publication and distribution may be brought to book. Not long ago a special edition was placed on the streets of Berlin during the evening hours on the strength of a rumoured attempt on a European sovereign. The story proved to be fictitious from beginning to end, and, a prosecution being instituted, the proprietor was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for fraud, and was fined £2 4*s.* for the unlawful sale of the paper; the printer of the sheet was fined £15 for aiding and abetting in the fraud, and £1 for transgressing the Press

Law ; and three news-agents were fined as accomplices in this imposition on the public.

A peculiar journalistic institution in Germany is the semi-official (*offiziös*) Press,—that part of the Press which represents the views of the Government. Yet, in truth, this is an institution which was not made in Germany at all, but in England, for Walpole both employed useful writers in the Press and paid them handsomely. It is the Prussian and Imperial Governments which have particularly fostered this questionable form of journalism. The semi-official Press existed before Prince Bismarck came to the front, yet that statesman gave to it an importance which it never before possessed, and which it has not enjoyed since he disappeared from public life. It was originally a measure of fear, resorted to when the "freedom of the Press" (precious phrase!) was enacted in Prussia. Hitherto the newspapers had been repressed and restricted in every possible way, and to criticise the Government and its policy frankly was an offence only to be expiated by confiscation of property and sacrifice of personal liberty,—perhaps by temporary exile. When the Press acquired a certain measure of independence, and learned to use it, the apprehension overcame the Government that resentment and retaliation would follow, and that the emancipated journals would avenge the wrongs of the past by

unmeasured hostility to their former persecutors. Hence the plan was devised of setting one newspaper to watch and counteract another, to follow and answer its criticisms, and to uphold the Government, its sayings and doings, under all circumstances. In Prince Bismarck's time monetary help was not withheld by the Government from newspapers which lent their columns to the exposition and endorsement of Ministerial policy — good or bad — but, as a rule, the "honour" of such a high association and the frequent reception of inspired articles and news announcements were regarded as acknowledgment enough. Prince Bismarck went so far as to endeavour to attach important English newspapers to the wires of his Cabinet, though without success.

As it still exists, the semi-official journal is a vehicle for informal Ministerial pronouncements upon current political questions, and, though the public has a fairly accurate idea as to what is semi-official in such journals and what is simply editorial and carries no further weight, the tie between the Government and its organs is a loose one, and when desirable it is generally possible to disclaim responsibility for utterances which may prove to be inconvenient or premature. From the English standpoint it is difficult to see wherein the real advantage of semi-official journalism consists, save to the newspapers

privileged, while the disadvantages are obvious. The late Count von Caprivi was so disappointed with the failure of his "body-organs" to do their duty well, and to rise to the occasion when a great emergency occurred, that he first thought of establishing a new semi-official journal on improved lines, which should be more effectively under Ministerial control than any hitherto, and then seriously considered the repudiation of semi-official journalism altogether, but he resigned before either course was adopted. Perhaps no stronger condemnation of the institution has been spoken than that which came from a prominent Conservative publicist :

"Its success has been very small, but its corrupting influence on the other hand very great. The publishers of these dependent organs undertake to defend the doings of the Government under all circumstances. It is their duty to demonstrate the Government's infallibility. Such a position is, for any man of character, so distressing that only seldom are able writers—hardly ever honourable ones—willing to accept it and the humiliations which it entails ; thus it comes about that the semi-official Press is generally in bad hands. Yet these dependent newspapers are really of no value, because their character is speedily known, even though the Government should deny it. Certainly in a free country the Government should not ignore the

Press ; on the contrary, the more it looks for support to active political parties the more must it desire to be ably represented in literature, and where there is a strong Ministry there will be Ministerial newspapers corresponding in character. Nor is there any reason why a Ministerial party should not continue to support an organ. But there should be no Press that is supported by public money, or by Governmental bodies as such, nor yet a Press Bureau, which gives the parole to the Ministerial organs, and lays its cuckoo-eggs in as many strange nests as possible."

But the few recognised semi-official organs do not nearly represent the journalistic influence which is at the command of the Government. In the provinces a host of small news-sheets are ever ready to do its bidding, and to defend its policy through thick and thin. These are the so-called *Kreisblätter* and *Amtsblätter*,—"District newspapers,"—which have the privilege of publishing the paid official announcements. The revenue derived therefrom never makes millionaires, but it is a welcome addition to the income of a small newspaper, whose proprietor is expected to pay the Government back in flattery and good words.

In contents and conduct the average German newspaper of the better sort has the appearance of immaturity, and suggests a reading public of

which the editor and his colleagues do not stand in any great awe. The literary standard is decidedly a high one, and to many daily journals writers of national celebrity regularly contribute ; but while learning is present, prodigious and impressive, dulness is apt to go hand in hand, and of genuine enterprise there is little trace. The signed article is common, and alongside of it a system of semi-anonymity is followed. Here the contributions are marked by figures, letters, or other signs, not indeed understood by readers generally, yet enabling wide circles to identify the writers. Such journals as these are strongly political, and their survey is as wide as the globe itself, for the German editor is in general very well informed and versatile, and his cosmopolitan interests do him the utmost credit. His passion for abstract reasoning may depreciate the practical value of his reflections, but he is painstaking in the acquisition of facts, thorough-going in his treatment of them, and he never has doubts. Art, letters, and the drama are certainly taken more seriously by the German than the English Press of the first, and, indeed, of every rank. Here, whatever be its other shortcomings, the German newspaper excels. Not only is space found for able contributions on these subjects in the daily issues, but it is a common custom to publish a free literary supplement with the Sunday number, and this may always

be taken up with the certainty of finding readable essays of a belletristic character. The *feuilleton* is not universal, though some of the best-known German journals would as soon think of omitting the story which appears daily "under the rule" at the foot of the first page as of withholding from the Government a daily mead of praise or blame, as the case may be. How little the very best of the German newspapers can claim to be genuinely national in influence and circulation may be judged by the remarkable prominence which is given to what is known in England as "local news." The most trivial incidents of the street and of private life, such as are barely recorded by the English country newspaper, fill daily not a few columns of metropolitan journals which are constantly regarded in England as representative of national opinion. The truth is, that with all its imperial status and its importance in international politics, the intellectual air of Berlin is distinctly provincial.

Of the German provincial Press little need be said, save that it is very provincial indeed. It is noteworthy, however, that the large weekly journal has not the vogue which it has in England. A daily issue of the smallest and most insignificant kind is preferred to a weekly issue of infinitely higher merit ; and the German plan of subscribing for newspapers by the quarter, half-year, and year makes the publication of

daily sheets easier, for though the impression may be a small one, it is always certain. There is before me a typical daily newspaper issued in an unknown provincial town. It has four pages of execrably printed text, altogether making about a quarter of an ordinary eight-page English journal, though the cost is proportionate,—barely more than a penny farthing per week. The front page is devoted to local news, the back page to advertisements, another half page is taken up by the *feuilleton,* and of the rest a full page goes to foreign news, — Swiss finance, Italian labour troubles, American tornadoes and bankruptcies,—to which are added an inspiring report on the latest sea serpent and a few humorous paragraphs to fill up. It is no very sensational fare, but it is a daily newspaper, and that is all that is needed.

What is euphemistically known in England as the "religious" Press is absolutely without counterpart in Germany. There are small clerical news-sheets of a very innocent order, intended mainly for the parsonage study ; and the Church Guilds of working-men (both Protestant and Roman Catholic) have their sectional organs, but popular newspapers dealing with ecclesiastical and religious interests on broad lines do not exist, and it is not certain that if they did there would be a great demand for them. "The religious newspapers ; what are they for?" asked

of me a well-informed German, to whom this peculiarly Anglo-Saxon institution had been named : "I suppose for sick people, or those who live where there are no churches?" Holy simplicity ! He did not know that the English religious Press exists for the purpose of political propagandism, and of proving to the secular journals that they have no monopoly of party rancour. Yet religion is not excluded from the German secular Press to the extent that it is from the English. Each has its ecclesiastical reports, but, in addition, the German editor is not above preaching a little on his own account occasionally in the columns which are reserved for the expression of his views. Especially is this the case when the great festivals of the Church come round. Then the rationalistic editor of the most Radical of journals will, in the sincerest and most matter-of-fact way, exhibit a knowledge of things religious which is as peculiar as it is extensive.

The only suggestion worthy of imitation which the advertising columns of the German Press offer is the care which is taken to keep the news and the business portions of the newspaper apart. Though not so numerous, the advertisements are, in appearance, far more obtrusive than in the average English journal ; but, in compensation, they are, as a rule, given a place alone, generally in separate sheets, an act of

consideration which the English newspaper reader would count as a virtue in his favourite publishers. On the other hand, the German newspaper receives many advertisements of a kind it would be better without. It has its "agony" column, as the *Times* has, but it is alone in having its marriage market, and a very undignified market it is. Advertisements like the following, which are taken at random from newspapers of the highest standing, do not confer dignity on the Press, or reflect creditably upon the people who pay high prices for their appearance: "Manager of an old institution, of pleasant exterior, seeks a pretty, presentable lady (widow), very strong, weight seventy-five to eighty-five kilogrammes, but of fine figure, as helpmate." "I seek a husband; how shall I go about it? Kind advice is sought by," etc. "An Israelite lady, twenty-three years old, beautiful, of a highly esteemed family, with a dowry of eight million marks (£40,000), desires to become acquainted with a gentleman, count or baron, free from prejudice against her race, with a view to marriage. An introduction may easily be arranged to take place in a health resort to be named, and the tact and discretion of the lady may be relied upon. The advertiser is prepared to be baptised into the religion of the gentleman."

The domestic joys and sorrows also occupy a

place in the German newspaper which the national reserve would not approve in England. The announcements of births and deaths are not restricted to bare facts, but are weighted with an amount of detail which would shock the English sensibility. Thus: "J—— S—— begs to announce, with great pleasure, that his wife has given birth to a healthy and heavy boy." "On the Emperor's birthday God has made us happy by the birth of a healthy boy." "The happy birth of a healthy and strong girl is announced by A—— S—— and wife." "Just arrived, a strong boy.—S—— Q—— and wife." "I hereby announce to relatives and friends the happy delivery of my dear wife, Clara, of a healthy boy." Betrothals are regularly announced in the newspapers, and it not infrequently happens that when an engagement to marry is abruptly broken off the parents on both sides publish to the world independent and not necessarily identical versions of the affair. The lady's parents naturally let it be understood that it has taken place entirely by their wish, while the bridegroom's explanation depends, of course, upon his good-nature and sense of chivalry.

Of obituary notices the following is a fair sample, save that it is shorter than usual: "Today died suddenly, at 8.45 A.M., our dear, heart-good, beloved father, father-in-law, grandfather, brother-in-law, and uncle, the *rentier* C——

T——, in the eightieth year of his age. The mourning relatives ask for unspoken sympathy." Novel in their way, too, are the eulogistic memorial notices and verses frequently published on the anniversaries of the deaths of respected citizens by friends and admirers. It is a harmless and even admirable way of paying tribute to departed worth, and a good set-off against the want of appreciation from which even the best of men and women may suffer during life.

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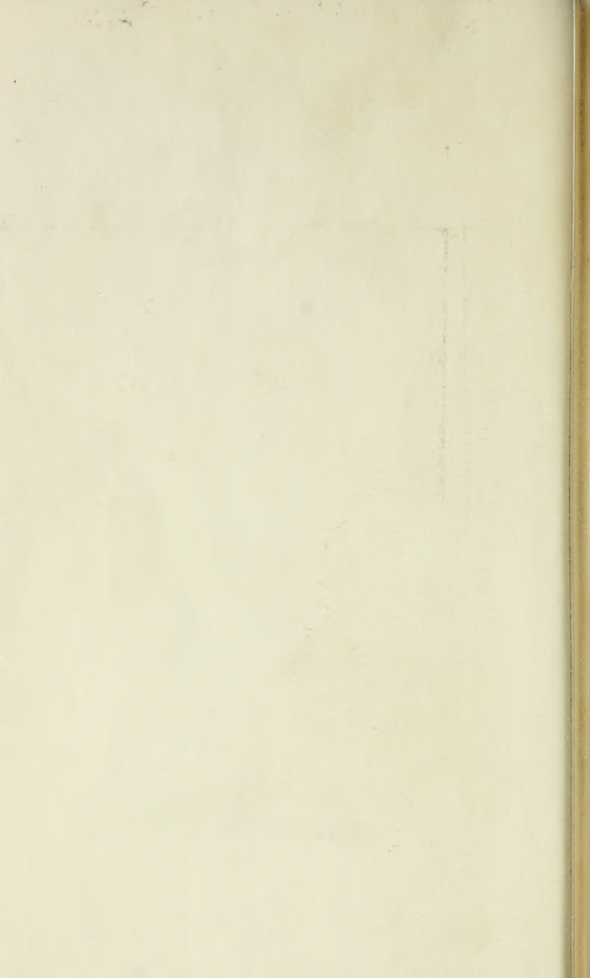
THE END



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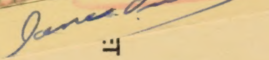

Annie M. Barnes (Mrs C. Barnes)